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# The Nation

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February 26, 1983 $1.25; U.K. 65p

FEB 22 1983
PERIODICALS DEPARTMENT

**END and the 'Peace Offensive'**
By E. P. Thompson

EDITORIAL

## THE OLD NEW DEAL WARS

"Acceptance of Alger Hiss's guilt," argues Kenneth O'Reilly in his new book, *Beyond the Hiss Case*, "had become a necessary step for many liberals" on their journey from the "tender-minded" optimism of the New Deal to the "tough-minded" intolerance of the cold war.

The Hiss case is a landmark of that journey. To the old New Deal stalwarts, the trial was an attempt to smear their reform movement with red paint. To the new cold warriors, Hiss's conviction was proof of the perfidy of the left and the need for a new national security apparatus to combat the "Communist threat."

Three decades have passed, but the contest to define the meaning of the Hiss case remains unresolved. It emerged again last week in New York City, when U.S. Court of Appeals judges heard arguments on Hiss's appeal of a lower court decision denying his application to set aside his conviction. Judge Ellsworth A. Van Graefland's hectoring of Hiss's attorney and his curt denial of the lawyer's request for two minutes of rebuttal time (in contrast to his polite treatment of the prosecution) was predictable and, as it happened, prophetic: two days later, with unaccustomed haste, the panel affirmed the lower court decision. Now the contest will continue in an appeal to the full Circuit Court.

But the ideological background noise in the courtroom seemed more significant than the legal proceedings. When Judge Thomas Meskill, the former governor of Connecticut, asked Hiss's attorney, "Aren't all Democrats—I mean defendants—in that position?" the old New Deal wars seemed ready to explode again, if only by parapraxis. One was reminded of the famous slip by Senator Joe McCarthy in the course of a vicious attack on Adlai Stevenson back in 1952: "Strangely, Alger—I mean, Adlai . . ." tail-gunner Joe said.

**GILDER'S NUMBERS GAME**
Philip Green

**EVANGELICALS & GUATEMALA**
Donna Eberwine

**THE 'BELLES LETTRES' PAPERS (II)**
Frank Page

**ROBERT LOWELL**
Bernard McCabe

**DEATH & THE CONSTITUTION**
Sanford Levinson

THE MALE REVOLT

## AFTER THE BREADWINNER VANISHES

BARBARA EHRENREICH

In popular wisdom, it was women, and especially feminists, who brought about "the breakdown of the family." What has gone almost unnoticed is that men too have changed, and in a way that directly threatens the traditional family centered on the male breadwinner. In the last three decades, men have come to see themselves less and less as breadwinners, and have ceased to measure their masculinity through their success as husbands and providers.

This drastic change in men, and in our cultural expectations of them, has been ignored, downplayed or else buried under the weary rubric of "changing sex roles." True, our expectations of adult womanhood have also altered dramatically in the last thirty years. The old feminine ideal—the full-time housewife with station wagon and suburban ranch house—has been largely replaced by the career woman with skirted suit and attaché case. Partly because the changes in the woman's role were given conscious articulation by the feminist movement, changes in men (and in the behavior expected of them) are usually believed to be derivative of, or merely reactive to, the changes in women. Yet what we could call the "male revolt" began well before the revival of feminism, and stemmed from dissatisfactions every bit as deep, if not as idealistically expressed, as those that motivated the "second wave" feminists.

Signs of male discontent began to emerge in the 1950s, a time when the media celebrated American "togetherness" and all men were expected to grow up only in order to settle down. To do anything else was less than grown-up, and

*(Continued on Page 240)*

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# LETTERS.

## LIBERAL DISSENT IN RUSSIA

*New York City*

It is sad that American intellectuals on the left continue to betray themselves as dogmatists who rigidly equate criticism of the Soviet Union with pro-Western capitalist attitudes. Such an attitude is evident in Stephen F. Cohen's assessment of the status and future of Soviet dissent in his February 12 "Sovieticus" column in *The Nation*. Cohen begins with the assertion that the liberal strand of the Soviet dissident movement is in decline because the liberal dissidents' prominence in the 1970s was primarily due to Western media hype and "had little to do with their appeal inside the Soviet Union." This assertion is premised on the erroneous assumption that these dissidents "addressed their protests primarily to Western governments rather than to Soviet officials or fellow citizens." Such remarks only attest to the fact that Cohen has little familiarity with the dissidents' writings.

In a long line of books published in the West containing liberal dissidents' political writings, one can discover that each of the dissidents has written the greater part of his or her protests and appeals to Soviet officials and the Soviet media. They cannot be blamed for ideologically biased Western reporting. It was the lack of response on the part of the Soviet regime to such reformist appeals that prevented any reformist discourse from evolving in official circles.

Cohen's charge that the liberal dissidents never appealed to a wider Soviet populace is particularly insidious. It was the liberals' idea of universal human rights that made possible a solidarity among such diverse groups as workers, oppressed minorities and disaffected intellectuals. One of the liberals' greatest accomplishments was the underground publication of *The Chronicle of Current Events*, which was circulated regularly in five of the Soviet Union's republics for ten years. It was the only uncensored publication in which Soviet citizens could voice criticism, and its circulation created the most extensive nongovernmental communications network since the revolution. It is also peculiar that Cohen chooses not to mention the workers' free trade-union movement, which has been widely publicized in the Soviet Union only through the underground liberal press.

At a time when we have witnessed the phenomenon of Solidarity in Poland, it is crucial to rethink the possibilities of progressive change in Soviet bloc countries. There now exists in those countries the possibility of collective movements that can embrace diverse elements of society and that can gradually wrest power from a regime. Cohen's formula for political change in the Soviet Union allows for only two alternatives: revolution from below or reform from above. It is an outdated formula which was abandoned by most people in Soviet bloc countries after the failure of "reforms from above" under Khrushchev, and in Czechoslovakia and Poland in the late 1960s.

Cohen ignores this history altogether and clings to petrified illusions of socialist reform that few outside American left intellectual circles would share. He places much hope in the influence of dissident socialists, ignoring the fact that these reformers, most famous among them Leonid Plyushch and the Medvedev brothers, were also embraced and supported by the liberal dissidents. If one were wise, I should think one would support the movement that holds the greatest promise of achieving the broadest support among the Soviet populace. The liberal dissidents have laid the foundation for such a broad-based solidarity. A more explicit program of change can only emerge as a stronger collective identity takes shape. In the meantime, we should support such processes and not undermine them. *Marta Zahaykevich*

## COHEN REPLIES

*New York City*

When Americans speak about the Soviet Union, they usually reveal more about their own political attitudes than about Soviet realities. And too often, those attitudes are uninformed, unoriginal, unwise and uncivil. This has long been true of Americans of all political persuasions, who habitually find in the Soviet Union only what they seek. Countering that tradition of commentary on Soviet affairs is one purpose of my "Sovieticus" column. Some of the responses to it are therefore predictable.

My first column evoked an angry letter from Michael Parenti on behalf of the Soviet Union [Dec. 18]. Parenti dismissed me as an "establishment Princeton Sovietologist," a label presumably designed to excuse him from writing a single word about the substance of the column. That familiar tactic revealed something about Parenti, but nothing about Soviet affairs.

Three columns later, Harold Buchman wrote to label me a "demonologist" [Jan. 22]. He, too, wanted an attitude from me—he wanted to read "something nice" about the U.S.S.R.—not analysis, and thus also failed to respond specifically to anything I had written.

Marta Zahaykevich agrees that I am "insidious," though she speaks from a different political viewpoint; she associates me with "left intellectual circles." Her attitude systematically undermines her own argument. The point of her first sentence is unclear. She then ignores the crux of my analysis—the inability of liberal Soviet dissidents to develop a program of change. She goes on to make a succession of factual errors: *The Chronicle* is in its fifteenth, not tenth, year; it is not the "only uncensored" Soviet periodical, only the main liberal one; dissident trade unionists have not been "widely publicized" in the U.S.S.R.; and the Medvedevs are traduced, not "embraced," by liberal dissidents. Finally, Zahaykevich commits the folly of wanting to support the dissident movement with the "broadest support among the Soviet populace." That would be, as I point out in my column and as Soviet liberals readily admit, the right-wing dissident movement, which includes quasi fascists.

But why single out my personal critics? President Reagan tells us the Soviet system is on the verge of collapse. Not because it is so, but because he wishes it to be so. Zahaykevich insists that liberal dissidents are paving the way for a Solidarity-style movement in the U.S.S.R. Not because she has any evidence, but because she wishes it to be so. And because she confuses the Soviet Union with Poland. *Stephen F. Cohen*

## HARPER & ROW CASE

As we went to press, Judge Richard Owen handed down his decision in the case of *Harper & Row and Reader's Digest v. The Nation*. He found for the plaintiffs.

We shall have more to say about the First Amendment implications of this decision regarding our story about President Ford's account of an unprecedented event—the post-Watergate pardon of one President by another [see "Behind the Nixon Pardon," April 7, 1979]. For now, let it be noted that the important social issue raised by the case is whether public officials have the right to withhold public information for private profit. We continue to believe that they don't.

The critical legal issue raised by Judge Owen's opinion is whether or not what *The Nation* published was "news." On this issue Judge Owen placed his judgment not merely above that of *The Nation* but also above that of Fred Friendly, former president of CBS News; David Halberstam, Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist, and Richard Reeves, media critic—the expert witnesses who testified in *The Nation*'s behalf.

We believe the court made a decision that improperly intrudes on journalistic discretion, and we intend to appeal. *—The Editors*

*The Nation* welcomes letters—typed, double-spaced and no longer than 300 words, please. Longer letters may be edited for reasons of space. Our policy is to publish as many letters as space permits, but inevitably a backlog develops, so bear with us.

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*The Nation* is available on microfilm from: University Microfilms, 300 North Zeeb Rd., Ann Arbor, MI 48106.

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*The Nation* (ISSN 0027-8378) is published weekly (except for the first week in January, and biweekly in July and August) by Nation Enterprises and © 1982 in the U.S.A. by the Nation Associates, Inc., 72 Fifth Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10011. Tel.: 212-242-8400. *Subscription Mail Address:* Nation Subscription Service, P.O. Box 1953, Marion, Ohio 43305. Second-class postage paid at New York, N.Y., and at additional mailing offices. International Telex: 667 155 NATION.

*Regular Subscription Price:* One year, $35; two years, $65; six months, $17.50. Add $7 per year postage Canada, Mexico; $13 per year other foreign. All foreign subscriptions must be paid in equivalent U.S. funds. Claims for missed issues must be made within 60 days of publication date; back issues available $3 prepaid ($4 foreign). **Please allow 6-8 weeks for receipt of your first issue and for all subscription transactions.** Subscription orders, changes of address and all subscription inquiries should be sent to: *The Nation,* Subscription Services, P.O. Box 1953, Marion, Ohio 43305.

# EDITORIALS.

## King and Country?

The moral consequences of action are always clearer in the revising of history than in the making of it. When student members of the Oxford Union voted in 1933 to withhold their military services from "king and country," their historical referent was the awful ambiguity of the Great War, that conflict among competing empires for trade advantage and real estate acquisition. The portentous rhetoric of the period, about a war to save democracy, had fooled one generation now dead in the trenches; the students of the 1930s would not be fooled again. They could not know that history would not repeat itself.

By the end of the decade, history was in convulsion. Hitler's war was diametrically different from its antecedent; the new conflict, at its core, pitted democrats against tyrants. To withdraw from the struggle was to accede to genocide. The majority in the Oxford Union had, after all, also been fooled, and those who had vowed under no circumstances to fight would die on the beaches of France for their mistake.

Fifty years later to the day, a surviving splinter of the old Union membership restaged the great debate of February 9, 1933, when the rejectionist resolution was carried. Max Beloff, the celebrated political writer and academician, had spoken for the motion in his student days; now, surveying the sweeping historical landscape from the vantage point of a life peerage and with the moral certitude of a survivor, he condemned the "foolish arrogance" of his comrades, and their "statements which were factually and morally untrue." This year, the audience voted overwhelmingly to defeat the motion.

Although Lord Beloff's revisionist campaign was specif-

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ically directed at the Oxford neutralism of the 1930s, it found a contemporary target as well. Speakers for and against the "queen and country" resolution (as it was renamed) referred to the new neutralist sentiment in Britain, the movement to withdraw from NATO's missile command and the widespread disenchantment with great-power politics. The opponents of the motion spoke of the moral monstrosity of Munich and the desperation of appeasement politics before World War II, but they also referred, by analogy, to the dangers of nuclear disarmament in the face of a Soviet threat. Implicit in the re-debate—and in the heated press reports attending it (the story made page 1 of *The New York Times*)—was the equation: 1933 equals 1983.

But history is no more replicable among the great powers of Europe, and America, in the 1980s than it was in the 1930s. As E.P. Thompson argues in his essay on page 232, the nuclear superpowers are locked in a deadly "game plan" which holds their respective populations in a kind of political thrall, while it threatens the very life of the planet. It is no more "moral" to side with one nuclear exterminator than the other; the truly courageous position must be close to the old Union stance of independence from—and opposition to—the beasts of both worlds.

# Jobs Politics

With the ringing words, "This is not the best bill we Democrats could write, but it may be the best bill we can enact into law," House Speaker Tip O'Neill endorsed the emergency jobs bill that Ronald Reagan's left hand, politically speaking, drew up without his right knowing about it. Even if the Reagan program were "the final and complete resolution of the human needs that exist in society"—which Representative Thomas Foley said it was not just before he endorsed it—the fact remains that the Democrats are taking a quick ride on the President's coattails.

The reason Tip & Co. are hitching their wagon to the Administration bill, even though it does not target areas with the highest unemployment or offer much help to women and minorities, is that they fear Reagan would veto any bill they proposed. Rather than make the effort, they reason, why not share the symbolism of the Reagan bill and thereby seem to be "doing something"? The Democrats called the White House measure only "phase one" of their own efforts on behalf of the jobless, but we fear that phase two also corresponds to Ronald Reagan's strategy, namely, hope that the economy mends quickly.

The Speaker's embrace of the jobs measure reminded us of how lavishly the President used the word "bipartisanship" in his State of the Union address, and how unctuously he tipped his hat to the opposition for getting him off the anti-Social Security petard, on which he was hoist by his own words. Now that the Democrats are cooing bipartisanly on unemployment, will they compromise on the Administration's proposed $30 billion social services cuts in the 1984 budget, which Tip O'Neill once resolved to oppose till hell freezes over? Less than two months ago the Democrats stripped Phil Gramm of his seat on the House Budget Committee because he had worked closely with the President on the last budget. Was what Gramm did then so different from what Tip & Co. are doing now?

# A Mouse Roars

Last week the voters of Palau, an island chain in the Western Pacific which the United States administers as a U.N. trusteeship, voted to live nuclear-free rather than move to greater autonomy under a Compact of Free Association. As Giff Johnson reported in these pages ["Militarizing Palau," December 11, 1982], the price of greater freedom was acceptance of U.S. bases on their soil. To do this, the islanders would have had to override, by a 75 percent majority, a provision in their Constitution that bans the storage, transit or use of nuclear weapons and nuclear wastes in Palau.

U.S. military planners have long had designs on the island chain, which presumably include storing nuclear weapons there and sending nuclear-armed ships into Palauan waters. On the ballot, the offer of free association (question 1A), and the $1 billion fifty-year development package that would have come with it, was linked to overriding the nuclear prohibition (question 1B). There was also a third question, which asked the islanders to recommend what status they wanted should they reject the compact.

By a vote of 3,818 to 3,192 the Palauans voted to override the constitutional ban—considerably less than the 75 percent needed. They voted yes to the compact by 4,232 to 2,639. On the third question, 46 percent of the voters opted for independence and 54 percent for commonwealth status. Although these totals may seem mutually contradictory, they accurately reflect the prevailing sentiment in favor of free association and against rescinding the nuclear ban. And the Palauans said, if we can't have both, we don't want the political and economic benefits of free association with the United States. By linking the compact to the nuclear provision, the U.S. government had in effect held hostage the Palauan's home rule and the $1 billion aid program to approval of the bases. To this the people of Palau replied: "Nuclear weapons? Not for a billion dollars."

# Indirect Guilt

The verdict of the U.S. media on the Israeli commission of inquiry is in. David Shipler of *The New York Times* paid tribute to its "exacting standard of humaneness"; Trudy Rubin in *The Christian Science Monitor* called the commission's report "a stunning moral triumph"; in an editorial, the *Los Angeles Times* declared, "Out of tragedy and anguish and shame has come a certain redemptive honor."

A recurring theme in these and other press comments has been the contrast between Israel's willingness to investigate

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the massacre and Lebanon's failure to punish the Phalangists who actually did the killing. Some praise for Israeli democracy in this instance is merited, but to blame Lebanon for not punishing the Phalange is disingenuous, since the Israeli government, not the Lebanese, controls the Phalangist militia.

When the accolades have ceased and the furor over the Cabinet reassignment of Ariel Sharon and the resignations of the generals has stilled, sober reflection will suggest that the commission failed in two important respects. It did not disclose all the facts, and it did not assign legal and political responsibility in a way that could diminish the likelihood of a repetition of the massacre.

The commission cited the unambiguous obligations that international law imposes on an occupying power to insure the well-being of civilians, but it went on to profess a "lack of clarity" on the question of whether or not Israel was legally the occupier in West Beirut. The commission then invoked, in stern phrases to be sure, the vaguer moral precepts of civilized societies and enunciated its own doctrine of "indirect responsibility."

The facts disclosed by the commission—and by its own account it did not disclose all of the facts it had uncovered—warranted a finding of more than indirect responsibility:

(1) The Phalangist militia was "ordered" into the camps by Israeli Chief of Staff Lieut. Gen. Rafael Eytan. Neither Amin Gemayel, the President of Lebanon, nor his father, Pierre Gemayel, founder of the Phalange, actually control the militia. In any case, both of them were unaware of Eytan's order and of the subsequent movement of the militiamen into the camps.

(2) At 11 A.M. on Thursday, September 16, Phalangist commanders met with Gen. Amir Drori, commander of Israeli troops in Lebanon, and Gen. Amas Yaron, divisional commander for West Beirut, to "coordinate" the militia's entry into the camps and to arrange for a "communications set" at an Israeli post overlooking the camps. At 6 P.M. the Phalange entered the camps. An hour later, a lieutenant who was one of Yaron's aides overheard a jocular conversation in which Elias Hokeiba, head of the Phalangists' intelligence service, gave the signal to start killing civilians. The Arab-speaking Israeli lieutenant passed on the information to Yaron, who was present at the scene.

(3) The Israeli Army gave the Phalange logistical support during the forty-hour massacre that followed.

Although the commission did not explicitly state it, at least in the portions of its report released to the public, it is known that the Phalange has accepted not only "orders" from the Israelis but also salaries and training.

The finding of indirect responsibility is based on a single premise: Israeli soldiers did not pull the triggers and Israeli officers were not present during the killings. By this logic, the Israeli government is exonerated so long as a few of its officials resign, are fired or are transferred.

The doctrine of indirect responsibility has extremely dangerous implications. Israel already has a surrogate force in the West Bank—the Village Leagues—and it has armed and trained militias there. In southern Lebanon, Israel has armed the forces of Maj. Saad Haddad and is now organizing militias, drawing recruits from among the hoodlums and thugs living in the area.

There have been recent reports that Palestinians in southern Lebanon have been murdered: five bodies found one day, seven another, sixteen in the latest gruesome discovery by the International Red Cross the week before last. These crimes point up the danger of the principle of indirect responsibility. Such a doctrine creates a climate that might encourage future atrocities of the kind the commission deplored, by surrogate forces carrying out Israeli government policy. The only consequence to the government if its involvement were discovered would be a few resignations.

Perhaps its compulsion to narrow its verdict to indirect responsibility explains the commission's failure to look into the political environment in Israel that made the Beirut massacre possible. The commission acknowledged that the Phalangists' "hatred of the Palestinians" should have been taken into account by Israeli commanders and that the Phalange "leaders' plans for the future of the Palestinians when said leaders would assume power" should have been seen as a warning of what the militiamen might do in the camps. But the commission ignored Israeli enmity toward Palestinians as well as the strong current of Israeli policy seeking their expulsion and dispersal.

This attitude is crucial, because Begin and Sharon espouse the absorption of what they call "Judea and Samaria" into Israel and also envisage the de facto retention of southern Lebanon. Sharon's plan for the invasion of Lebanon, publicly known months in advance, had as its objective the destruction of the Palestine Liberation Organization in Lebanon and the dispersal of the Palestinian population. Menachem Milson, in the article in *Commentary* that won him appointment as civilian administrator of the West Bank, advocated the resettlement of the Palestinians outside Lebanon.

The commission's recommendations are not legally binding; but they carry an obvious political weight and could have established the norms needed to protect the beleaguered populace in the occupied territories. Its report could have underlined that evil results from banal ideas and intentions—like dispersing an entire people. It could have found that allowing Palestinian civilians to be terrorized by Israeli surrogates is a matter of direct governmental responsibility; that Israeli-paid, -trained and -controlled troops should be considered Israeli soldiers even if they are remunerated secretly; that officials who pay, lead and order such surrogates are guilty of any crimes the surrogates commit. Had the commission faced up to its responsibilities concretely, and paid less regard to public relations, its judgment might have struck hard at the Begin-Sharon agenda of expelling a people from their ancient homeland.

EQBAL AHMAD AND SHEILA RYAN

*Eqbal Ahmad is a fellow at the Institute for Policy Studies. Sheila Ryan is a freelance researcher and writer on the Middle East.*

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# DISPATCHES.

## ■ ZAIRE: Mobutu's $4 Billion Stash

In 1978 the International Monetary Fund hired Erwin Blumenthal, former head of the foreign affairs department of West Germany's Bundesbank, to put Zaire's chaotic finances in order. As director general of the Bank of Zaire, Blumenthal had the rare privilege of inspecting the books of President Mobutu Sese Seko, but less than two years later he resigned in frustration. His departing report on Zaire's finances was recently leaked to the Belgian press. In that report he tells of the "corruption of the group in power," and states that "control of financial transactions of the Presidency is virtually impossible. The President's bureau makes no distinction between state expenditure and personal expenditure."

Blumenthal once questioned the payment of more than $170,000 a month to a Belgian professor "for studies into methods for improving the welfare of the Zairean population." Between 1976 and 1978 the professor received almost $4 million. Blumenthal obtained Mobutu's authorization to cut off the payments, but he later learned that the professor was the guardian of the President's son, who lives in Belgium. "Naturally," writes Blumenthal, "after my departure the payments were resumed."

In the report Blumenthal also describes his discovery of more than a half-dozen "special accounts" controlled by Mobutu in various foreign banks, including a $470,000 account with the Bankers Trust Company of New York. Because of such "sordid and pernicious corruption," he says, "there is no chance, I repeat, no chance that Zaire's numerous creditors will ever recover their loans."

If any confirmation of Blumenthal's charges were needed, it recently came from Mobutu's former Premier, Nguza Karl-I-Bond, now in exile. Nguza told the London publication *New African* that Mobutu has stashed away a personal fortune approaching $4 billion. Nguza explained that much of this cash was siphoned off from revenues from sales of cobalt abroad: "The secret procedure was that a chartered plane of the Simetar Airline, registered in South Africa, would fly consignments of cobalt to that country early in the morning. The money received would be poured straight into Mobutu's numbered Swiss account."

## ■ KUWAIT: Paper Profits

"Bad blood should be shed," declared Abdul-lateef Youssef Al-Hamad, Kuwait's Finance Minister. With these words the government subjected the Kuwaiti financial community to an old-fashioned leeching. Last August the country's stock exchange collapsed under the weight of several years of rampant speculation. Hundreds of investors lost paper profits of more than $90 billion. Even more startling than this sum was the revelation that eight individuals, including one member of the Kuwaiti Assembly, lost a total of $68.5 billion among them. All eight have been forbidden to leave the country, and their assets have been frozen.

At the root of the speculative fever was a classic pyramid scheme. Speculators made investments using postdated checks in the expectation that the value of their investments would increase by 40 to 80 percent by the time the payment came due. Kuwait's banking laws don't permit postdating of checks, so most of the trading took place on the country's unofficial "curbside" stock exchange, the Souk al-Menakh. Mountains of these checks changed hands—until the inevitable happened. When stock prices stopped rising, traders were caught with obligations far beyond their resources as checkholders presented the checks to the banks for payment.

In the wake of the collapse the government decided to let the big debtors fall. But it did set up a fund of $1.85 billion to reimburse "small creditors" for their losses. (By Kuwaiti standards, a small creditor is one who is owed less than $6.75 million.) At least thirty big debtors and perhaps several hundred smaller creditors are expected to go bankrupt during the months it will take to sort out all the debts.

There is no trading on the Souk al-Menakh today, and the official stock exchange—the only freely operating stock exchange in the Arab world—may have been dealt a fatal blow. A report on the crisis by the American Embassy in Kuwait estimates that $800 million in capital has fled the country. The report concludes, "We may well see sizeable capital outflows in view of the depressed local economy and limited investment outlets."

Seventy percent of Kuwait's $85 billion in reserve assets are already invested abroad, $30 billion in the United States alone. In fact, Kuwait will earn more this year from its foreign investments than from its oil fields. So who needs a domestic stock market?

## ■ MEXICO: The End of D.I.P.D.

The kidnapping and murder of an 11-year-old boy in Mexico City late last year precipitated the abrupt and complete dissolution of a secret police force.

The Mexican press, which with a few exceptions tends to be sensationalistic, began running daily stories with banner headlines on the search for the boy. Spurred by this attention, newly installed President Miguel de la Madrid applied intense pressure on police agencies to find the abductors, but they failed. After the boy's body was found, de la Madrid openly called for lynch justice: "I want those guys dead."

In early January federal police killed a man wanted in connection with the crime when he resisted arrest. Only then did they discover that he was a former member of the División de Investigaciones para la Prevención de la Delincuencia (D.I.P.D.), one of the most repressive and hated institutions in Mexico.

The kidnapping-murder was only the most recent of a train of abuses that have marked the D.I.P.D.'s sixty-one-year existence. For decades its agents operated as a law unto themselves, with the tacit approval of the government. They drove illegally imported cars, which became their

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KAI BIRD AND MAX HOLLAND

trademark, and employed some 3,000 thugs, known as *madrinas* (godmothers), to do much of the dirty work of kidnapping and extortion. D.I.P.D. agents wrung bribes from people they had detained or from their relatives, and passed on a portion of the proceeds to their superior officers.

In response to the public outrage touched off by the boy's murder, on January 14 President de la Madrid issued a decree abolishing the D.I.P.D. While this action met with widespread approval, there were also fears about what the unemployed D.I.P.D. agents would do next. A number of them were offered jobs in the federal police, but many were found to be ineligible because they did not meet the education requirement—completion of primary school. And what of the *madrinas*? The answer to that question may lie in the crime wave that erupted in Mexico City following the presidential decree. There are reports that former secret policemen were involved in some of the biggest operations.

There is a more frightening prospect than a rising crime rate, however. Mexico has so far been spared the kind of politically motivated violence endemic to Latin America. But saddled with the world's largest debt to commercial banks, falling oil prices, a 98 percent inflation rate and phenomenally high unemployment rates, the country is ripe for political polarization, and former secret policemen could become hired guns for the extreme right. Recently, four former D.I.P.D. agents were charged with kidnapping three members of the Trotskyist Partido Revolucionario de los Trabajadores. As the London-based magazine *Latin America Weekly Report* noted, these were the first "disappearances" of the de la Madrid administration.

## ■ HONG KONG: 1997 And All—What?

It has come to be called the "1997 Question" in Hong Kong—a reference to the expiration date on Britain's lease with China on the New Territories, which make up 92 percent of Hong Kong's land area. Although everyone knows the Question, no one knows the answer.

Beijing has announced its intention to recover sovereignty at the earliest possible date; thereafter it will allow what it calls *gangren zhigang*—local governance—of Hong Kong by its citizens. Capitalism would be allowed to continue, and the new government would have some freedom to admit tourists and to make agreements to sell textiles abroad. The British and not a few Hong Kong businessmen have been trying to persuade the Chinese to allow a transitional period of thirty years or longer before they reclaim their land.

This diplomatic uncertainty has led the Hong Kong government to suspend plans to construct a costly new airport—a move widely viewed as an indicator of lack of confidence in the city's future. And the local press has been deluged with advertisements touting various havens for people planning to take their money and run. *Asiaweek* reports that the Ecuador Estate Development Company put up billboards commending that country as a "fine, secure place in which to live and invest." A Filipino developer is promoting his new condominiums as "a gateway to Philippine residency," while a Lisbon company promises the right to Portuguese citizenship in return for an investment of $31,000 and the purchase of a $61,000 condominium in Portuguese-administered Macao. "Live peacefully in Hongkong with a foothold in Europe," the advertisement proclaims.

The smart money, however, may be heading for U.S. shores. There has been a spate of multimillion-dollar real estate transactions in San Francisco recently involving Hong Kong investors.

## ■ BANGLADESH: Drugs Off the Market

Gonoshasthaya Pharmaceuticals Ltd. (G.P.L.) doesn't operate in the same league as the major multinational drug companies. But this tiny Bangladeshi firm may have sparked a reform of drug codes that will drastically reduce the sales of those companies in the Third World.

Founded by Dr. Zafrullah Chowdhury to service his rural network of "barefoot doctors," by 1981 G.P.L. was selling some drugs for half the price charged by foreign companies. The multinationals sought to put G.P.L. out of business by undercutting its bids on government orders. (The price cuts were only temporary, of course.) But Dr. Chowdhury and others fought back, persuading the government to issue a Drug Control Ordinance, a listing of approved and banned drugs modeled after one issued by the World Health Organization. Of the 4,140 drugs on the market last year in Bangladesh, the new law bans 1,707 as either harmful or unnecessary. The bulk of the proscribed drugs are expensively packaged and advertised multivitamin capsules, cough mixtures, throat lozenges, infants' gripe water and tonics. Surprisingly, these items sell very well in Bangladesh. In 1980 seven vitamin and antacid products accounted for 45 percent of Squibb's sales in the country.

Before the new law was passed, 75 percent of Bangladesh's drug market was controlled by eight multinational companies. Usually these companies charged their local subsidiaries more to import a product than it would have cost them to buy it on the open market. Thus, Squibb's branch in Dacca paid three times what a local company paid for tetracycline.

Such practices will be rare under the new policy. That worries the international pharmaceutical industry, which sells an estimated $30 billion worth of drugs in the Third World every year. The industry has taken out full-page ads in the Bangladeshi press and a U.S. trade organization has persuaded the State Department to urge the government to reconsider the law.

The Dacca government, however, has held firm. A committee recently appointed to review the new law made only one concession to the industry: export licenses were granted for foreign drugs that the government had planned to destroy because they were judged to be too harmful.

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# ARTICLES.

SLEEPWALKING INTO A TRAP

# END and the Soviet 'Peace Offensive'

E.P. THOMPSON

The peace movement, which has forced disarmament onto the international agenda, is now sleepwalking into a situation of extraordinary complexity. The complexity is not of its making. But there is no virtue in walking into it asleep.

One can see several possible situations confronting us in 1983. One is that the arms-reduction negotiations between the United States and the Soviet Union break down in Geneva and cruise and Pershing 2 missiles are planted in Europe in the face of massive protests, leading perhaps to the internment of thousands of peace activists and the strengthening of the security state. The Soviet military will then proceed to develop its own cruise missiles and deploy them in Eastern Europe. The dragon's teeth sown at Greenham Common and Comiso in the West spring up as nuclear-tipped missiles in the East. This is the worst case, and we might not long survive it.

Another possible situation is this: one bright day at Geneva the superpowers will come out of the conference chambers arm in arm. A deal will be announced: let us say, no cruise missiles in the Netherlands or Belgium, but little nests of them in Britain, Italy and perhaps West Germany. In return, the Soviet Union will reduce its SS-20s to fewer than 100.

Such an agreement would represent a continuation of the game plan of superpower "arms control." Some in the peace movement might be tempted to claim a small "victory," but actually it would be a grave defeat. For the agreement would legitimate a new "balance" at a higher and more dangerous level, and the superpowers would have got the matter back from the streets and the peace camps and into their own hands again.

Therefore Europeans must say now, in advance of such a bargain, that *any* cruise missiles on our territory (or off our shores) are—to use a favorite term of Soviet and American negotiators—"unacceptable." Certainly, the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament and other antinuclear groups will never countersign any deal that allows a single new missile on European soil.

A third possibility—and a likely one—is even more complex. The Soviet leaders, who have discovered that the Western peace movement carries a certain political force, might put serious negotiations on the back burner and engage in a propaganda campaign to influence middle-of-the-road opinion in all of Europe, as they are now doing in West Germany, and especially to influence those politicians who are coming to fear the political costs of forcing NATO's missiles down unwilling electoral throats. The peace movement would be part of the play, but the moves would be called by the Soviet Union.

Such a campaign would have the objective of screwing up NATO and unraveling the "Western alliance." If a hung Bundestag results from the German elections on March 6, with the Green Party holding the balance of power, the deployment of Pershing 2s in West Germany would be stopped without any need for Geneva negotiations. (NATO would probably then call for an increase in the number of missiles in Britain.) The next stage of the Soviet Union's campaign would be to bring similar pressures to bear upon moderates in the Netherlands, Belgium, Italy and Britain (perhaps again in an election). Toward the end of 1983 Yuri Andropov and his advisers would review the screwed-up scene from a position of enhanced advantage, and calculate the most favorable negotiating posture available to Soviet military and diplomatic interests.

The sleepwalkers in the peace movement can see no problem in all this. The United States intervenes continually in the Western European political scene, and it is a novelty to see the Soviet Union doing the same. And some of the Soviet Union's immediate aims coincide with those of the peace movement. After all, the Russians are quite as much against cruise missiles as is the most dedicated Western activist. And the peace movement's goals are also to screw up the plans of NATO, to affect the outcomes of elections and to gain greater autonomy for Western Europe vis-à-vis the United States.

Moreover, the package of proposals drawn up by the Warsaw powers at their summit in Prague on January 5 and 6 touches on themes raised by the Western peace movement in the past several years: nuclear-free zones in Europe, the prohibition of all nuclear tests, a zone of peace in the Mediterranean and much else. And the Soviet Union also adopted (and extended) the Palme Commission's proposal of a nuclear-free belt running through Central Europe, taking in the greater part of both German states. While the nuclear-free-zone idea presents difficulties—it could lead to demands for Britain to become NATO's nuclear garrison state, for example—the call for the demilitarization of Central Europe and the removal of the insanely dangerous "tactical" nuclear tripwire must be vigorously supported.

What can possibly be wrong, then, with this plethora of Soviet peace proposals? In many cases they are good, and to the advantage of the people on both sides. What is wrong is

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what the proposals do *not* offer (or what they close off from discussion) and their manipulation of European domestic politics to the advantage of the Soviet Union.

Neither moralism nor fellow-traveling sentimentalism can be of any service in guiding the peace movement in its difficult relations with the Communist states. We are dealing, just as we are with the NATO states, with powerful entrenched military interests and with leaders who seek to advance their own objectives. The problem with the Communist rulers is that they are the ideological look-alikes of their opposite numbers in the West, thinking in the same terms of "balance" and security through "strength."

It is futile for the peace movement to place its trust in any heavily armed nuclear state, and especially in one where the information available to its citizens is strictly controlled and where public opinion can scarcely influence the rulers. The Soviet leaders may have no aggressive plans, but a nuclear deterrent remains immensely serviceable to them in freezing the status quo in Europe and in controlling their increasingly restive client states. At any time from 1980 to 1982 they could have halted the buildup of SS-20s, just as they could commence reductions now. It is as painful to them as it is to Prime Minister Thatcher to lose a single missile.

What the Soviet proposals close off from discussion are the most sensitive and troubling questions in the political relations between the two blocs. The aim of Soviet diplomacy is to encourage Western European nations to edge from beneath American hegemony, while reinforcing Soviet hegemony over Poland and the rest of the Eastern bloc. At the Prague summit, a secret session was held on the need to "re-establish the leading role of the Party" throughout the Warsaw bloc, and also (one supposes) on the need to prevent the infection of the peace movement from spreading to the East. While the peace offensive is being directed toward the West, the East is being placed under quarantine.

If the Russian policy were to bring some measures of disarmament closer to reality, then it might be possible to live with it. But it will not. It envisions that in 1983, Soviet diplomacy, aided by the Western peace movement, will succeed in dramatically reversing the postwar balance of power. The Russians count on public opinion, direct action and elections blocking or dislodging cruise and Pershing missiles from one Western state after another, and uncoupling Europe from U.S. strategies. Thus NATO modernization will be thwarted by the Western Europeans, the seat will be knocked from under the American negotiators at Geneva, and the Soviet Union will preside benevolently over the wreckage of NATO.

Yet it is unrealistic to expect that such a welcome loosening up of NATO could take place alongside a *hardening* of the Warsaw bloc. For one thing, the latter would mobilize conservative forces. Drawing upon huge reserves of ideology and wealth, they would rally to the defense of the old cold war West. At the same time repression in the East would sap the very springs of action of the Western peace movement.

This is because the force generated by this movement in the past three years has had a particular political accent: impatience at the domination of Europe by *both* superpowers; an overwhelming desire to break up the state of cold war, to set nations free from their client status, to open frontiers and to increase the flow of ideas and people between East and West.

These desires are an integral part of the peace movement. They are not a luxury, an "extra" which might be added to nuclear disarmament. They go along with disarmament, both as precondition and as consequence. They are not conditions that were inserted, at a late hour, into the program of the peace movement by END (European Nuclear Disarmament) or by any other group. They were clearly stated in the original transcontinental END appeal of April 1980.

The Western peace movement derives its strength precisely from its political independence, its "unacceptable" demands upon both blocs. If it should sleepwalk into a state of dependency in accordance with the Soviet game plan, its support could fall away as rapidly as it arose. The movement could be painted into an ugly pro-Soviet corner. We could come to the end of 1983 with West German Chancellor Kohl reinstalled in power, and even (God forbid!) Prime Minister Thatcher.

Yet in tandem with their peace offensive, the Russians are already making clumsy attempts to split the Western peace movement and to bring it in line with Soviet strategies. There is now a busy traffic of meddlesome "peace" brokers between East and West, miniconferences (assembled by selective invitation) in Moscow and preparations for a huge showcase "Peace Assembly" in Prague. While these attempts will no doubt provide Western cold warriors some welcome copy for their expensive advertising campaigns, all that need be said about them is that they are inept and counterproductive. In particular, the now-famous letter from Yuri Zhukov (the president of the Soviet Peace Committee) to Western peace organizations, in which he tried to instruct them in their duties, has blown up in his own face.

What is more serious is that the lights of independent thought are going out all over the East. Political trials go on in Poland and more are expected, perhaps of members of the KOR group. Arrests of peace workers have been reported in East Germany. On the same day as the Prague summit, a spokesperson of the Czech human rights group Charter 77, Ladislav Lis, was arrested: among the incriminating documents seized by the security police were drafts of messages to the Western peace movement. Recently Laszlo Rajk—a name resonant in Hungarian Communist history—was evicted from his apartment in the center of Budapest, which one evening a week for the past two years he has turned into a *samizdat* bookshop [see Doug Ireland, "A Cold Wind From Poland," *The Nation*, March 6, 1982]. Rajk also is eager to join a dialogue with the Western peace movement: one of the *samizdat* wares that I saw in his bookshop three months ago was a translation of my book *Beyond the Cold War*. In Moscow the distinguished historian Roy Medvedev—an early signatory (in 1980) of the Appeal for European Nuclear Disarmament—was given,

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for the first time in some years, an official warning under the catchall clauses of Articles 70 and 190 of the Soviet criminal code, which ban "anti-Soviet activities."

The Soviet peace offensive is strictly for export. It has been accompanied by a stepped-up cold war at home. This hostility has been visited upon the small group of scientists, doctors and academics in Moscow who formed the Group to Establish Trust between the U.S.S.R. and the United States last June.

Several visitors from the Western peace movement have recently spoken at length with members of this group. They were convinced of their bona fides and were humbled by their dedication in the face of persecution that far outdoes what happened during the worst period of Quaker "Sufferings" in England in the late seventeenth century.

Sergei Batovrin, the young artist who founded the group, had eighty-eight of his antiwar paintings confiscated at an exhibit the group sponsored on Hiroshima Day, August 6. He was confined for some weeks in a psychiatric hospital and was placed under house arrest five times in November; his apartment has been repeatedly searched by the K.G.B.

Other members of the group have been temporarily detained on trumped-up charges, interrogated and sacked from their jobs; their telephones have been cut off and K.G.B. cars have been stationed outside their apartments. Oleg Radzinsky, a young teacher, was arrested at the end of October; he was recently transferred from the Lefortovo Prison to the Serbsky psychiatric institute. Reports that he is in poor health are causing concern among his friends. Two supporters of the group in Siberia were arrested last July for collecting signatures on a peace petition from workers in a sawmill; they too are now in a psychiatric institute.

The objectives of the Group to Establish Trust are explained by Batovrin in an interview in the February 11 *New Statesman*. Unlike some Western peace organizations, the group does not define its aims in terms of nuclear disarmament alone. It has set for itself the more general objective of reducing cold war hostilities by encouraging direct exchange and communication between citizens of the East and the West.

The group has sent urgent signals to sympathizers in the West that it expects the arrest of all of its members any day. A case is being prepared against them, and they have been accused in *Literaturnaya Gazeta* of being "dying carrion-crows" and (absurdly) of supporting the massacre of Palestinian children. In a letter in the current *END Journal*, Prof. Yuri Medvedkov, a distinguished geographer, writes: "We risk our liberty and even our lives every day but to be outside the peace movement is impossible to us. It's the point of honour, the point of being humans." And Batovrin concludes his interview:

> We are not just talking of the persecution of a small group of people. . . . The fate of the world depends upon whether each person understands that a peaceful future requires a peaceful defence of the right to struggle for peace.

It dismays and astounds me that there should be any hesitation in the Western peace movement about coming to the group's defense. This is not (as some have suggested) a matter of that capacious term "human rights." What are at issue are *peace* rights and direct dialogue between peace workers. Genuine peace movements have always defended one another's rights: the right to communicate, the right to opt for alternatives to military service, the right just to exist. END is aiding, with a little success, members of the Turkish Peace Association now on trial. Support for these groups surely should not require discussion.

Yet a clatter has gone up, rather widely, that suggests that human rights have "nothing to do with" our only proper concern: disarmament. The sometimes unavowed premise underlying this clatter is the mirror image of standard Western apologetics, now transferred to the East: the Soviet Union is only "responding" to the Western weapons buildup; unlike Western nukes, Soviet nukes are only for "defense."

But nuclear weapons are no nicer when they are wrapped up, on that side as on this, with professions of peaceable intent. It is helpful to be reminded (as we often are) of the prodigious Soviet losses in World War II. Those losses fostered a historical consciousness that contrasts with that of the United States, where there are still popular notions that war is always for export; it never visits the American home. That callow, boastful and menacing voice is not heard in the Soviet Union; there is no appetite there for a war of conquest or expansion.

History's legacy to Russia is paranoia, a tetchy sensitivity to any "instability" near its borders, a readiness to see in any foreign ideas—even in a flight of doves—the conspiracies of Western imperialist agents. Those weeping Soviet grandmothers who still deck with flowers the graves of the last war have dry eyes for Afghanistan, as they had, in 1968, for Czechoslovakia. The Soviet people will support their rulers in preparations for any war that is "in defense of peace."

I am sorry to rehearse these plain truths, which I will be told are "anti-Soviet." But it is time for the peace movement to wash the sleep out of its eyes. If we are entering into political relations with the Communist states, then we must do so as actors and not as the acted upon. If the Soviet leaders are in earnest about some measures of disarmament, and if they need the force of Western peace opinion to achieve their objectives, then we must insert our own trans-continental demands into the negotiations.

The Western peace movement has never been just about particular missiles. It has been about human neighborhood, communication, survival: the hope for what Ian McEwen has called "womanly times." It has refused to adopt the abstracted logic of the two great adversary blocs. The Western peace movement is expressive of a political and cultural sea change which touches sensitive places in our consciousness, subverts the pat certainties of thirty-five years of cold war, questions the game plans of the old alliances. It is in one sense an opening to the East: not to the East of armed states but to the East of our fellow creatures.

The peace movement is a phenomenon analagous to the "thaw" in the East after the death of Stalin. One reason the

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thaw came to an abrupt end was that the clever statesmen of NATO saw in it only Soviet "weakness" to be exploited for their own advantage; there was no corresponding thaw in the West. If the Soviet leaders make the same error in 1983, and seek to exploit what they perceive as "weakness" and disarray in the West to their own advantage, then not only NATO but the human story itself may be finally screwed up.

This is the moment for the Western peace movement not to fall in behind this or that makeshift of arms control but to enlarge our demands upon both parties to the maximum possible—and perhaps impossible. The opportunity that we have now may never be repeated. It will never come round again in this generation. We must strike directly at the structures of the cold war itself. A freeze on weapons will not be enough. At the same time we must work for a general and simultaneous thaw in both blocs.

The time to induce this mutual thaw is now, when Western peace consciousness (which *is* the thaw) is still growing, and when the Soviet leadership (which wants desperately to halt NATO modernization) is bidding for the Western peace movement's favors. We must make it clear that we find it intolerable that independent voices in the East are harassed or silenced; that we will not scurry around to conferences in Moscow or assemblies in Prague so long as that repression continues; that we intend to act as free citizens of a healed world and that we do not require permits from Zhukov or one of his clerks to talk with citizens on the other side; and that, if it has to come to that, it is as easy to sit down in front of the Soviet Embassy as on Greenham Common.

I am not proposing some cold war "linkage" between disarmament and human rights. Our refusal of nuclear weapons has always been unconditional: no one in the peace movement has ever said that this demand is dependent on any prior condition whatsoever. Rather we must press, in the same moment as we refuse weapons, for an opening of frontiers and prisons. Neither the cause of peace nor that of liberty can wait upon the other: it is natural that they go forward together. A genuine thaw in the East will make the cause of peace in the West unstoppable. Renewed repression in the East will feed the roots of a renewed cold war.

There are more direct routes to peace than through the mountains of Geneva. We said, when we began, that we would take the hand away from the politicians and play it ourselves: by demonstrations, by direct action, by changing peoples' hearts and minds, by influencing elections, by breaking through the barriers between East and West without the license of any clerk, by surrounding bases and noxious embassies.

We have almost been diverted, in our sleep, into a different game. It may flatter our self-importance to be invited to play a hand at the card table of power. But we are novices there, the cards are marked, and the game will end—as it always does with popular movements—in our being sold down the river by our partner.

We should continue as we began. Our methods may be blunt and undiplomatic, but they seem to work. We refuse nuclear weapons. Our sisters are watching Greenham Common. There are also watches at Molesworth and Upper Heyford, and at Comiso. As for the Russians, will they please cut the blather and start dismantling the first 100 SS-20s? Now.

There is a marvelous peroration in the declaration of the Prague summit about "the broadest possible intercourse" between East and West. It calls for "the extension of the mutual spiritual enrichment of the European peoples, propagation of truthful and honest information, and cultivation of sentiments of mutual friendliness and respect."

Amen to all that. But what has this got to do with negotiations between statesmen? (Whoever heard a statesman propagate "truthful and honest information"?) This is work for free citizens, not for arms controllers. We already have the work in hand. If the Warsaw Pact leaders really want a general and reciprocal thaw in the relations between peoples, then they need do very little. They can start now. They could open some frontiers; they could open the doors of some prisons and psychiatric institutes. They could call off the K.G.B. surveillance of members of the

DRAWINGS BY J-C SUARÈS

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Group to Establish Trust, equip the security men with thermal underwear and send them off to watch an SS-20 site.

If we are to seize this last chance of putting Europe back together, the best thing we can ask of the current set of statesmen, East and West, is to get out of the way. □

GILDER'S NUMBERS GAME

# The Case of the Fake Footnote

PHILIP GREEN

Everyone has thought, at one time or another, that more can be learned about a famous person or a momentous event from seemingly irrelevant details than from lengthy analyses in the press. An inadvertent gesture may tell us more about a speaker than his entire speech; a footnote may tell us more than an entire book.

I was reminded of that recently while reading George Gilder's *Wealth and Poverty*, the ideological bible of the Reagan Administration. Those who are familiar with the book may recall that Gilder argues that men work harder if they have families to support; that "liberated" (i.e., working) women undermine their husbands' incentives to work hard; that the welfare state drives men from their homes by obviating the need for a male breadwinner; that discrimination against blacks on the labor market is not a major cause of poverty; and that the more capital a family man has, the more likely he is to invest it, thus benefiting society as a whole.

After reading these rather casually tossed-off claims, which seemed totally unbelievable and yet went to the core of Gilder's argument, I decided to track down their source. What began as idle amusement led to a discovery that tells us something important about the social movement known as the New Right.

On page 68 of *Wealth and Poverty* Gilder begins his account of "the nature of poverty" with the statement:

> The first principle is that in order to move up, the poor must not only work, they must work harder than the classes above them. Every previous generation of the lower class has made such efforts. But the current poor, white even more than black, are refusing to work hard. Irwin Garfinkel and Robert Haveman, authors of an ingenious and sophisticated study of what they call *Earnings Capacity Utilization Rates*, have calculated the degree to which various income groups use their opportunities—how hard they work outside the home. This study shows that, for several understandable reasons, the current poor work substantially less . . . than either their predecessors in American cities or those now above them on the income scale.[4] [Keep your eye on that Footnote 4; it is not inconsequential] . . . The findings lend important confirmation to the growing body of evidence that work effort is the crucial unmeasured variable in American productivity and income distribution, and that current welfare and other subsidy programs substantially reduce work. The poor choose leisure not because of moral weakness, but because they are paid to do so.

Wow! So much for the welfare system, the average reader will think. But I was curious, so I turned to that powerful antiwelfare study by Garfinkel and Haveman, *Earnings Capacity, Poverty, and Inequality* (Academic Press). (Since Gilder offers no other sources for "the growing body of evidence" he mentions, it was the only place to turn.) The study *is* ingenious and sophisticated. It is also fascinating, for what it reveals about poverty, the labor market, George Gilder—and perhaps the Reagan Administration as well.

Gilder's Footnote 4, in its entirety, cites the Garfinkel-Haveman study, "pp. 32 and passim." Right there I began to have doubts. According to my dictionary, *passim* means "here and there," so it is not very informative to be told by Gilder that support for his assertions will be found on page 32 and "here and there." What actually appears on page 32 and *passim* confirmed my doubts.

Page 32 in Garfinkel and Haveman's book contains nothing but Table 3.3, which shows quite clearly, as the authors put it: "For *families*, the rates of earnings capacity utilization are nearly constant over the distribution of economic status." (Emphasis added.) Garfinkel and Haveman define "earnings capacity" as "the income stream that would be generated if a household unit employed its human and physical assets to capacity," assuming 2,000 potential working hours per person each year, adjusted for age, race, sex, etc., as well as for such factors as unemployment and illness. "Earnings capacity utilization" is actual earnings expressed as a percentage of earnings capacity.

In other words, the authors do not say that the poor on the whole work "substantially less . . . than those now above them on the income scale," as Gilder claims they do. Moreover, there is not a single word in the Garfinkel-Haveman study, on page 32 or *passim*, to suggest that poor people today work less than "their predecessors in American cities." That conclusion was made up by Gilder out of whole cloth; it is simply false.

Gilder's antifeminist notion that working wives decrease their husbands' motivation to work is equally ill founded. All that Garfinkel and Haveman's data, summarized in Table 3.3, show is that husbands in the upper earnings capacity groups tend to utilize more of their earnings capacity and wives in those groups tend to utilize less. In the lowest tenth of the sample, which is ranked according to earnings capacity, married white men utilize 84 percent of their capacity and their wives 35 percent, while in the highest income groups, husbands utilize 95 percent and their wives 24 percent. These differences are barely significant.

Of course, no causation is implied by this inverse correlation, since people don't necessarily marry someone with the same earnings capacity. In any event, there are many plausible explanations for this minor statistical correlation. For

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instance, women generally get less in return for their education than men do; that is, while women who are college graduates have a high earnings capacity, they aren't properly rewarded for it because of sex discrimination. Women with low earnings capacity tend to marry men with low earnings capacity, and therefore are likely to have to work.

And so Gilder's assertion that low-income women who work keep their husbands from earning as much as they could is, to put it kindly, fanciful. There is no reason to believe that if all working wives quit their jobs, all their husbands would work harder and boost their earnings capacity utilization. At the upper income levels, the amount of additional male labor would be insignificant, since these men are already working at almost full earnings capacity. And unless all husbands at the lower income levels were able to make up for the lost earnings of their wives by moonlighting, which is unlikely, millions of families would be plunged into poverty. That would be the real result of forcing working women back into the home.

There is an important difference in terms of earnings capacity between single men and those who are married. Here Gilder seems correct: in general, single people utilize less of their earnings capacity (they work less hard, as he would put it) than married people do, though the difference is negligible among black men and is pronounced only among white men and women.

In his book, Gilder asserts, "Most important in judging the impact of marriage, husbands work 50 percent harder than bachelors of comparable age, education and skills" (p. 69). This statement refers us to Footnote 5—an ibid. to the *passim* that precedes it. It is also false. Only among white men in the bottom 20 percent of earnings capacity utilization does anything approaching that 50 percent figure hold. But more to the point, the Garfinkel-Haveman measure says nothing about how "hard" men work. A man's earnings capacity utilization rate may be low because he worked fewer hours than he could have, or because he was paid less than most people doing the same job. Thus in describing single white men who have low earnings capacity and low capacity utilization rates, the authors say that although these men may earn less because they are single, as Gilder claims, they may be single for the same reasons they earn less—because they are physically handicapped, for instance, or unskilled. These impediments are more related to social class than to laziness.

More important, Garfinkel and Haveman point out that their figures generally "make no allowance for the fact that the real costs entailed by attainment of [earnings capacity utilization] may vary among individuals" (p. 17). That is true for women who are unable to work because they cannot afford acceptable child care. It is also true for individuals who "have been unemployed for long periods and dropped out of the labor force" or "are neither seeking nor holding employment because of illness or disability" (p. 19). Obviously unemployment and disability affect poor people more than they do people in the higher income brackets. To the extent that there is any correlation between low earnings capacity utilization and low income, factors other than laziness account for it.

Nothing in Garfinkel and Haveman's data justifies Gilder's wild attacks on working wives and welfare programs. There is no evidence that, as he puts it, "the maintenance of families [by women] is the key factor in reducing poverty" (p. 68). In fact, the data in Table 3.3 suggest that the most direct way to reduce poverty is to enable more women, married or single, to enter the work force! Of course, that could happen only if society offered a much better system of child care and if the attitudes of many men toward the social role of women changed—in other words, if the main tenets of Gilderism (or Reaganism) were repudiated.

As for Gilder's frequently repeated remark that "the poor choose leisure . . . because they are paid to do so," Garfinkel and Haveman are unequivocal: "Comparing the distribution of earnings capacity and pre-transfer income, we conclude that at least 80% of the variation in income is caused by factors other than differences in capacity utilization" (p. 93). The cost of child care accounts for two thirds of the remaining 20 percent (p. 43), while welfare payments and the "taste for leisure rather than income" count for almost nothing at all. The authors conclude, "Those who are poor by the income measure are not in that state because of relative failure on their part to exploit economic capacities. This suggests that neither laziness nor reliance upon public income transfers is responsible for low earnings" (p. 93). Thus the authors Gilder cites to support his claims say precisely the opposite.

In fact, Garfinkel and Haveman go on—though Gilder ignores this—to develop a definition of poverty based not on income but on the earnings capacity measure. People are "poor," they say, in terms of their *potential* to earn income rather than in terms of their *current* income: "We find that blacks, those who live in large families, and those who live in families with strong attachments to the labor market [that is, the "working poor"] are more likely to be poor by the capacity-based definition than by the standard definition" (ibid.). They add, "If economic status is presumed to be better reflected in earnings capacity than in current income, the disparity between blacks and whites is even greater than income differences imply. . . . This disparity between the races is caused in large measure by discrimination against blacks in labor markets . . ." (p. 94).

As to that decisive 80 percent in income variation that is *not* caused by differences in earnings capacity utilization, Garfinkel and Haveman argue that most income inequality stems from differences in people's skills. Though the authors do not do so, one might conclude that of even more importance is the fact that society rewards different skills (and the possession of property, which they do not mention) so unequally. Therefore, only a strong commitment to the redistribution of income and income-generating property can diminish that inequality. Even before the election of Ronald Reagan, the movement of our minimal welfare state in that direction was barely perceptible.

The Reagan Administration's program was calculated to

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increase inequality: consider the Kemp-Roth tax cut, with its distinct preference for those in the upper-income brackets; the cuts in spending for social programs; the attack on affirmative action; the repudiation of the Equal Rights Amendment. Gilder's ideological justification of Reaganism is encapsulated in the long passage from his book I quoted at the outset. Yet on the basis of the Garfinkel-Haveman study, it can reasonably be argued that public funding for child care, full-employment policies, a comprehensive public health-care system, affirmative action programs—the whole range of policies and programs that the right rejects—actually help individuals and families and improve the general welfare. Gilder simply distorts the plain evidence staring him in the face to justify on "factual" grounds an ideology that he knew would seem callous. If the disrespect for truth in his pop scholarship is at all representative of the Administration's thinking, we may have a clue as to how supply-side economics came to be where it is now: in rubble. □

EVANGELICALS AND GUATEMALA

# To Ríos Montt, With Love Lift

DONNA EBERWINE

On January 8, the day the Reagan Administration announced that it had ended the five-year ban on military aid to Guatemala, 350 young evangelical Christians set sail for Gen. Efraín Ríos Montt's embattled land from San Pedro, California, on board the Anastasis. In its hold the 560-foot ship carried more than $1 million worth of grain, clothing, medical supplies and building materials—not to mention 500,000 Spanish-language Bibles. All of this cargo had been collected by American fundamentalists, for whom the survival of the Ríos Montt regime—despite its record of human rights violations and its brutal treatment of Guatemala's Indian population—has become a kind of crusade. More than 800 evangelicals connected to the project, most of them from the United States, were already in Guatemala when the Anastasis arrived at the port of Champerico.

The shipment was part of International Love Lift, an ongoing relief project sponsored by Gospel Outreach, a Eureka, California-based missionary organization of evangelical churches. This latest manifestation of the ties between the Christian right in the United States and the Ríos Montt regime also had the blessings of the State Department and the White House. The Administration's hope is that outpourings of Christian solidarity like Love Lift will improve the Guatemalan dictator's image among his own people and in the international community, where the documentation of human rights violations by such groups as Amnesty International, Americas Watch and the National Council of Churches has left it tarnished.

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Ríos Montt's ties to the American evangelical community can be explained by the fact that four years ago he became a born-again Christian. He is a member of the pentecostal Christian Church of the Word, known as Iglesia Verbo in Guatemala, which was founded in 1976 by relief teams of Gospel Outreach missionaries who had gone to Guatemala in the wake of a severe earthquake, and which still has a number of American fundamentalists on its board of elders. Not long after Ríos Montt took power in the March 1982 coup, he publicly invited the church's elders to be "spiritual advisers" to his government; two Guatemalan elders also serve as his top deputies.

Within three months of becoming President, Ríos Montt began to capitalize on Verbo's ties to U.S. evangelicals, and the latter's connections in the Reagan Administration. Last June, Francisco Bianchi, a Ríos Montt aide, attended a meeting in Washington at the home of U.S. representative to the Organization of American States William Middendorf. Also at the meeting were Presidential counselor Edwin Meese 3d, Ambassador to Guatemala Fred Chapin, Secretary of the Interior James Watt, Pat Robertson of the Christian Broadcasting Network (on whose *700 Club* television show Ríos Montt appeared shortly after the March coup) and the Rev. Jerry Falwell of the Moral Majority. Topic number one was improving U.S.-Guatemalan relations.

On July 27, State Department officials held a briefing on the Communist threat to Guatemala for a number of fundamentalists, including Robertson and representatives of Campus Crusade for Christ, Maranatha Campus Ministries and the Christian Broadcasting Network. At this session, the department made known its approval of Love Lift and expressed hope that shipments of food and teams of ministers would help "defuse" the situation in Guatemala. According to a report on the meeting that appeared in *The Forerunner*, a monthly newsletter published by the Maranatha ministries, State Department officials also expressed support of a plan to organize a convoy of "a thousand" trucks from all over the United States to carry supplies donated for Love Lift by American churches. (The proposed convoy never materialized.) *The Forerunner* reported that a State Department official had said that "a convoy of the scale being proposed might be the vehicle that could get U.S. recognition for the Montt government."

Robertson took up Ríos Montt's cause on his *700 Club*, making numerous appeals for prayers and financial support for the regime. One broadcast resulted in a flood of letters to the White House demanding U.S. military aid for Guatemala.

Gospel Outreach's appeals for contributions to Love Lift were stridently anti-Communist. Fund-raising letters (some of them accompanied by an endorsement from Representative Jack Kemp on Congressional stationery) denounced Nicaragua as a "Marxist model of oppression and hatred," and emphasized Guatemala's strategic importance as a bastion

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against the rising Red tide in Latin America. ("If Guatemala falls, what then?—Mexico?") Potential contributors were assured that their aid "will weaken the Marxists' position and decrease their ability to take advantage of Guatemala's rich oil supply, titanium, and other valuable resources."

Most of the Love Lift supplies were destined for refugee camps in the Ixil Triangle, located in a mountainous region that was formerly a guerrilla stronghold. The shipments were part of Ríos Montt's "Beans and Bullets" rural pacification program.

American evangelical Christians are serving as volunteers in that program. Verbo leaders and other missionaries, who have had experience proselytizing among the Indians, help the Guatemalan Army administer refugee camps sheltering some of the country's homeless people (estimated at anywhere from 250,000 to 1 million) who fled their villages during the government's counterinsurgency sweeps in the spring and summer of 1982. (Amnesty International has estimated that the campaign resulted in more than 2,600 civilian deaths.)

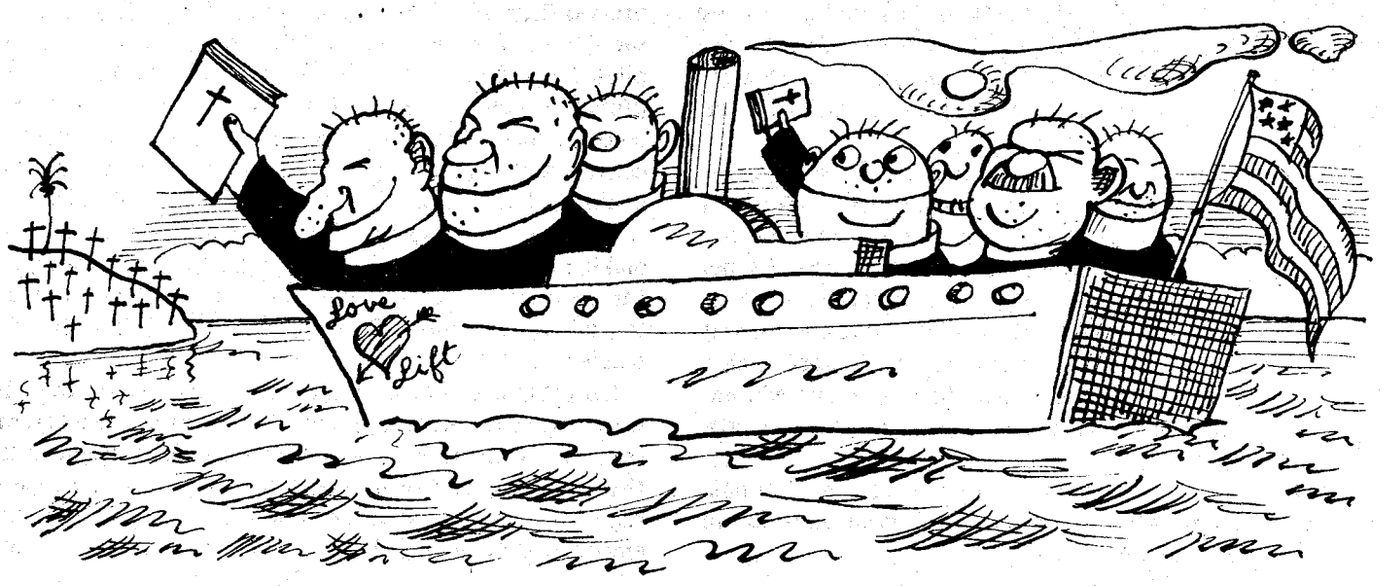
The bread cast upon the Guatemalan waters by American evangelicals has come back to them in the form of an increase in converts. Twenty-one percent of the people in Guatemala are now Protestant—an unusually high proportion in Catholic Latin America. After Ríos Montt took office, new evangelical churches sprang up, and the membership of Verbo and other major Protestant churches in Guatemala City soared.

The wave of conversions to Protestantism has exacerbated the longstanding enmity between Protestants and Catholics. Ríos Montt has sought to mend his relations with the nation's Catholic majority, but his fundamentalist rhetoric seems to convey the message that Catholicism is antigovernment. In the past two years, thirteen Catholic priests and hundreds of "progressive" layworkers have been murdered by government death squads, and pentecostal officers routinely detain Catholics at checkpoints but allow fellow Protestants to pass.

While Catholic leaders in Guatemala and in exile express concern about religious persecution, they think the Protestant boom may be short-lived. The religion of the majority of Guatemalans—descendants of the polytheistic Mayas—is a peculiar blend of animism and Catholicism. The Catholic Church has tolerated this hybrid faith, but the fundamentalists have sought to stamp it out. In many areas where Protestantism has taken hold, there has been an accompanying rejection of Indian dress and customs. Yet despite their outward conformity, most of Guatemala's Indians remain loyal to their cultural traditions.

Ríos Montt's campaign to win over the born-again community in the United States has not been an unqualified success. Last May he told *The New York Times* that he expected $1 billion in contributions from American fundamentalists, but only $1.5 million was raised for Love Lift. And the reports of human rights violations have been difficult to refute. Evidence of continued abuses by the army has been obtained from Guatemalan refugees in Mexico. Concerned by these reports, Ray Elliott, a missionary in Guatemala for the Wycliffe Bible Translators who has been working closely with the regime [see Bill Wallace, "Missionaries With a Mission?" *The Nation*, May 30, 1981], wrote to Verbo leaders last December asking for an explanation, but most of Ríos Montt's fundamentalist supporters dismiss allegations of army brutality as "totally wrong or totally perverted," according to *The Forerunner*. They accept the government's line that many of the massacres were the work of left-wing guerrillas.

Whether motivated by naïve good intentions or cold war paranoia, the youthful crusaders of Love Lift and their elders in the United States have been welcome and pliable allies of the Reagan Administration and the Ríos Montt regime. Fiercely anti-Communist and definitely not pacifists ("He who wields the sword does not wield it in vain," said Pat Robertson in praise of Ríos Montt's counterinsurgency program), the American evangelicals have been useful to the Administration as a source of ideological support in the face of growing Congressional criticism of military aid to

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Guatemala. In terms of both beans and bullets, they have served the Ríos Montt cause in this country well. □

# Breadwinner

*(Continued From Front Cover)*

the man who willfully deviated was judged, in both expert and popular opinion, to be "less than a man"—someone about whom "you had to wonder." Yet at the same time, middle-class men anguished over "conformity," which was covertly understood as acquiescence to the burdens of job and family. *Playboy* appeared, in 1953, as the first manifesto of open rebellion, describing wives as "parasites" and "gold diggers" that the free-spirited male eluded for life. By the end of the decade, the medical profession offered would-be male rebels a more respectable rationale than *Playboy*'s hedonism: the responsibility of breadwinning (combined with cholesterol) was what drove men to early deaths from heart disease. Soon after, psychology, the erstwhile champion of male heterosexual conformity, did an about-face, reclassifying responsibility as "guilt" and guilt as a psychic "toxin." By the end of the 1970s, the old ideological props for the male breadwinner ethic had crumbled. Today, the man who postpones marriage and avoids women who are likely to become financial dependents is considered not deviant but healthy.

The greater prosperity men gained from the decline of the breadwinner ethic has not been shared by women. A consequence of the changed economic relationship between the sexes has been what sociologist Diana Pearce calls the "feminization of poverty." In 1980, two out of three adults who lived below the poverty line were women, and more than half the families defined as poor were headed by single women. The number of households headed by poor women is growing at the rate of 15,000 a year, and if that growth continues at the same rate, according to the National Advisory Council on Economic Opportunity, "the poverty population would be composed solely of women and their children before the year 2000." For the increasing number of single mothers, there is only one thing left of the family-wage system: the fact that women, on the average, are paid less than a family (at current urban rents, less than a very *small* family) requires for a moderate standard of living.

If public policy cannot restore the breadwinner ethic and the male-centered family-wage system, then public policy can at least acknowledge their demise. To do so would require, for a start, a commitment to implementing some of the most elementary goals of feminism. They have been listed before, more fully and eloquently than I could hope to do. They were outlined at the International Women's Year conference in Houston in 1977, and then presented to an indifferent Carter Administration. They have been reiterated more insistently, at an endless variety of forums, since the advent of an actively hostile Reagan Administration. Here I will only briefly restate two points that are fundamental to a feminist economic program.

First, women should have the opportunity and the right to earn living wages—in fact, family wages, for many of them must support a family as well as themselves. This means the occupational segregation that locks 80 percent of women workers into low-paid "women's jobs" must be ended. It also means there must be greater financial recognition for those occupations that have come to be considered "women's work"—clerical, sales, light assembly and service jobs. There must be an end to all forms of discrimination, subtle and otherwise, that have kept women out of men's higher-paid crafts and professions; and those who choose a "woman's job," like nursing or clerical work, should receive pay equal to what men receive for jobs requiring comparable levels of skill and effort.

I should add that the goal of financial independence for women, however elementary in the sense of having broad feminist support, is more radical than it may once have appeared. It is clear in the 1980s, if it was not in the more prosperous 1960s, that antidiscriminatory measures like the Equal Rights Amendment are not enough to guarantee women's economic well-being. It will not help women to break out of their occupational ghetto if there are fewer and fewer well-paying jobs outside of it, and it is hard to insist on higher pay from employers who are busily disinvesting, fleeing overseas or replacing human labor with robots and microcomputers. For women (as well as for a growing number of men) the achievement of a family wage will require both a major redistribution of wealth and an economy planned to generate well-paying, useful employment—in short, an economic approach that is considerably to the left of anything in the current realm of American political discourse.

Second on the list of elementary goals, women need a variety of social supports before they will be able to enter the labor market on an equal footing with men. The most obvious and desperately needed service, both for women who are married and joint breadwinners and for those who are sole breadwinners, is reliable, high-quality child care. Job training programs are another necessity, if only because so many of us, in all social classes, were educated for dependency and were never offered the skills that might sustain us through long stretches of financial independence, if not for a lifetime. Finally, we must recognize that at least for the foreseeable future, many women will find themselves unable to enter the labor market at all—either because they have small children to care for or because they cannot find jobs that pay enough for material subsistence. This means there must be a government program of adequate income support—something far more generous and dignified than our present system of welfare. It is worth recalling that even before the recent wave of budget cutbacks, there was no state where the combined benefits of Aid to Families with Dependent

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Children (the major form of public assistance) and food stamps were enough to bring a family *up to* the official poverty level. For women supporting families, unemployment means destitution, and employment at the level of the minimum wage is not much of an improvement.

Feminists have demanded and fought for expanded social welfare programs from the beginning of our movement in the 1960s, from a time when such a policy seemed reasonable and even inevitable to a time when any expansion of government spending—other than military—is viewed as subversive to economic stability. Yet I believe that we need to push this set of demands even further. The collapse of the family-wage system requires nothing less than the creation of a welfare state, that is, a state committed to the welfare of its citizens and prepared to meet their needs—for financial assistance, medical care, education, child care, etc.—when they are unable to meet those needs themselves.

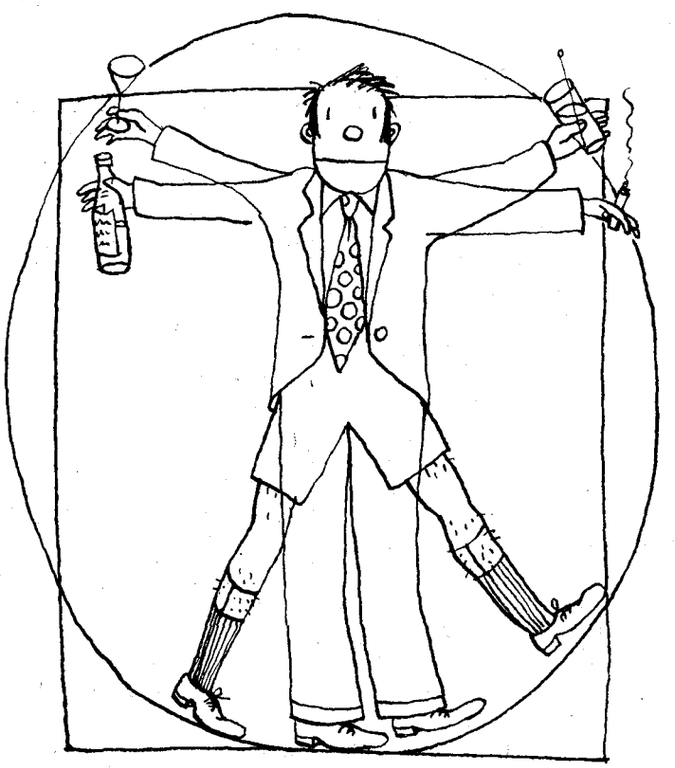
Those who believe that the country can no longer collectively afford such services should consider two obvious sources of revenue for social purposes: (1) increased corporate income taxes (corporate taxes have been declining steadily as a share of Federal revenue since the 1950s, while the burden of financing government activities has been shifted to individuals) and (2) drastically reduced military expenditures. As more and more people are coming to realize, our present stock of missiles and countermissiles does not constitute a "defense" but a standing invitation to annihilation. The kind of defense program we most urgently need is a program of defense against the mounting *domestic* dangers of poverty, unemployment, disease and ignorance—that is, we need a welfare state.

If that phrase, "welfare state," has been made to sound morally distasteful by our current policy makers, we should recall that the family-wage system was itself a kind of private-sector welfare system, in which a woman's only "entitlement" was her share of her husband's wage. Those who believe that it is somehow more honorable to rely on an individual man than on agencies created by public wealth are simply clinging to an idealized memory of male paternalism. The breadwinner ethic never had the strength of law or even the transient support of public policy. If men cannot be held responsible as individuals—and there is no way consistent with democracy to do so—then we must all become more responsible collectively.

There are those who will argue that a welfare state only substitutes one sort of paternalism for another. The conservative analysis of the social welfare programs of the 1960s is that they failed, and that they failed because they engendered dependency and helplessness in their beneficiaries. (This, at least, is George Gilder's argument; others on the right argue that there is no need for further social welfare spending because the programs of the 1960s *succeeded*.) I am more impressed by the analysis of scholars like Frances Fox Piven and Richard Cloward: that the social welfare programs introduced in the 1960s—limited as they were—succeeded not only in lifting many of their direct beneficiaries out of poverty but in enabling working people in the "near poor" category, which includes so many women, to struggle for wage and benefit gains from their employers.

Not, as Piven and Cloward would agree, that those programs are in any way adequate models for the future. In fact, one of the most important feminist criticisms of the programs that constituted President Johnson's Great Society is that they tended to assume a society of male breadwinners and female dependents. Thus, for example, Aid to Families with Dependent Children, whose beneficiaries are primarily single mothers and their children, continues to be based on the premise that the mere presence of a male in the household is a cure for poverty and a sufficient reason to suspend or reduce benefits. Job training programs like CETA have been faulted for tracking women toward low-wage service employment and away from potentially well-paying technical jobs. As Diana Pearce argues, social services must be based on the "acknowledgement that more and more women are financially on their own; that the female headed household is here to stay." Otherwise, government programs perpetuate the myth of male paternalism and the reality of female financial dependence.

Nor is there any reason why social welfare programs have to be intrinsically paternalistic. I will not recapitulate the arguments here, but Frank Riessman, Alan Gartner and many others have made a convincing case over the past ten years that publicly sponsored services do not have to be bureaucratically or professionally dominated, but can actually generate participatory citizenship and self-help initiatives. For example, instead of funding programs like Medicaid, which has served as a bountiful subsidy to the medical profession and associated industries, government health-care initiatives could focus on the direct provision of care, on preventive measures and on environmental improvement. And surely financial assistance does not have to carry the



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stigma associated with welfare. Consider the contrast between unemployment insurance, which is collected by both men and women, and welfare, which is primarily collected by women. There is no reason why the institutions of an American welfare state could not be democratic, accountable, decentralized and respectful of individual dignity—and there is no reason why liberals and feminists should abandon this as a goal.

For my own part, I do not propose an expanded welfare state as an ultimate social goal but as a pragmatic step that circumstances have forced upon us. My utopian visions are far more socialistic, more democratic at every level of dialogue and decision making, more "disorderly," as Paul Goodman would have said, than anything that would ordinarily be described as a welfare state. Yet women have very few immediate alternatives. If they had won equality and economic independence before the collapse of the family-wage system, they might have been able to step right into the liberal feminist vision of an androgynous and fully capitalist society. But the collapse of the family-wage system came first, before either the economy or the culture was ready to admit the *female* breadwinner on equal terms. The result is that, for an increasing number of women and children, the services that an adequate welfare state should provide have become essential to survival.

But what about the men? For there is, of course, more at stake here than their wages. The collapse of the breadwinner ethic, and with it the notion of long-term emotional responsibility toward women, affects not only the homemaker who could be cut loose into poverty but the financially self-sufficient working woman, not to mention the children of either. For better or worse, most of us grew up expecting that our lives would be shared with those of the men in our generation; that we would marry or, in the modern vernacular, that we would have "long-term committed relationships." Only within those relationships could we imagine having children (and not only because of the financial consequences of motherhood), or finding the emotional support to do what we increasingly identified as *our* own things. Yet we—and the "we" here includes not only the educated urban women, feminists and others, who conservatives might dismiss as members of marginal groups—face the prospect of briefer "relationships," punctuated by emotional dislocations and seldom offering the kind of loyalty that might extend into middle age. If we accept the male revolt as a *fait accompli* and begin to act on its economic consequences for women, are we not in some way giving up on men? Are we acquiescing to a future in which men will always be transients in the lives of women, and never fully members of the human family?

To an extent, that is what women are beginning to do: look for emotional support and loyalty from other women, while remaining, in most cases, sexually inclined toward men. A neighbor, abandoned by her husband two years ago, still hopes to meet "a nice, reliable guy," but her daily needs for intimacy and companionship are met by a local women's group. An acquaintance, single and successful in her career, plans to have a baby with the help of women friends who are committed to serving as "co-parents." Two divorced women in their 50s decide that it will be both cheaper and less lonely to share the suburban house that one of them inherited from her marriage. According to Howard University professor Harriette McAdoo, there has always been a strong tradition of mutual support among urban black women, and a similar pattern is now emerging among the growing number of single women in the suburbs. That aid may involve practical help, like the exchange of babysitting or the loan of a credit card, and it usually involves affectionate support—friends to call in a moment of depression or to share a holiday meal with. These are small steps, improvisations, but they grow out of a clear-headed recognition that there is no male breadwinner to lean on, and probably not much use in waiting for one to appear.

Yet I would like to think that a reconciliation between the sexes is still possible. In fact, so long as we have sons as well as daughters, it will have to happen. "Grown-up," in the case of men, should have some meaning for a boy other than "gone away"; and adulthood should mean more than moral vagrancy. If we cannot have—and do not want—a binding pact between the sexes, we still must have one between the generations, and that means there must be a renewal of loyalty and trust between adult men and women. But what would be the terms of such a reconciliation? We have seen the instability—and the indignity—of a bond based on a man's earnings and a woman's dependence. We cannot go back to a world where maturity meant "settling," often in stifled desperation, for a life perceived as a "role." Nor can we accept the nightmare anomie of the pop psychologists' vision: a world where other people are objects of consumption, a world of chance encounters of a "self" propelled by impulse alone.

I can see no other ethical basis for a reconciliation than the feminist principle—so often repeated—that women are also persons, with the same need for respect, for satisfying work, for love and for pleasure as men. As it is, male culture seems to have abandoned the breadwinner role without overcoming the sexist attitudes that role has perpetuated: on the one hand, the expectation of female nurturance and submissive service as a matter of right; on the other hand, a misogynist contempt for women as "parasites" and entrappers of men. In a "world without a father," that is, without the private system of paternalism built into the family-wage system, we will have to learn to be brothers and sisters.

Finally, I would hope that we might meet as rebels together—not against one another but against a social order that condemns so many of us to meaningless or degrading work in return for a glimpse of commodified pleasures, and condemns all of us to the prospect of mass annihilation. If we can do this, if we can make a common commitment to ourselves and future generations, then it may also be possible to rebuild the notion of *personal* commitment, and to give new strength and shared meaning to the words we have lost—responsibility, maturity and even, perhaps, manliness. □

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# BOOKS & THE ARTS.

## The Mailer Assignment

FRANK PAGE

Whenever I'm asked—and I often am—how things work at *Belles Lettres* magazine, I think of the day I started there, a year ago. The editor, Jonathan Margin, called me into his office for a little chat—actually to hear his welcoming speech.

". . . so we all have our individual tastes. And thank God! What else could justify fobbing off our judgments on a helpless public? We have an odd and, I might add, attractive gathering of tempers and temperaments here at *Belles Lettres*. Our sensibilities range from the vigorously vulgar to the exquisite and even effete. I won't tell you who has which, you'll have to discover that for yourself, but what I think you'll see is that in this office there's an eye for every effort. I like to think that we represent a critical construct of the American readership. So that when we say yes to a book we say yes within the confines of the book's intentions. We do not say no to mysteries, we say no to bad mysteries. We do not say yes to poetry, we say yes to good poetry. And if a book maintains an opinion, nay a bias, nay a prejudice, we try to state who we are and what we stand for, and then judge the book on the quality of its argument. What I'm saying is that at *Belles Lettres* we are interested in the how, in the means, in the process. . . ."

I must have shifted on the slippery, cushionless seat of the captain's chair in which I sat facing Mr. Margin, who democratically had come out from behind his desk to meet me on another captain's chair, because I had the feeling he skipped a few paragraphs in his speech to move closer to its center.

He was a long, thin man from an old New England family. He had a bony New England face and a deep voice enriched by self-amusement. "You've probably wondered how it is possible for a group of, as I say, diverse, if not divided, personalities such as ourselves to put out a magazine of book reviews. I often wonder myself. For instance, what do you think happens when two members of the staff disagree about a book?"

"Don't you leave that to the reviewer?" I said.

"Ah!" He was pleased by the question. "But which reviewer do you send it to, the hard reviewer or the soft reviewer, the John Simon or the Anthony Burgess?"

"I've seen soft reviews by John Simon," I said.

"Ah! But let's say this book is not by a dead European. Rather by a living American, moreover by an American who for years has been getting away with murder . . ."

"Heller?" I said.

Mr. Margin blanched. "I was thinking more of . . ."

"Styron?" I said.

He didn't blanch, but he did clear his throat. "Let's just say an overrated writer. In fact, you have exemplified my point. I say 'overrated writer,' but what do I mean but overrated in my opinion? So let's say there's another member of the staff, a respected member—you, in fact—who doesn't think the writer is overrated at all. You think this new book is a masterpiece. Whom do we send it to, John Simon or Anthony Burgess?"

"John Simon," I said.

"All right, why?"

"He's good at masterpieces, real and fake."

"And Anthony Burgess?" Mr. Margin said.

"He's good at real masterpieces but not fake ones."

"How so?"

"He doesn't say they're fake, he just uses his fake voice."

Mr. Margin's eyes narrowed. "I can see you're a clever young man."

Apparently he hadn't seen it when he hired me, and I wondered if he was sorry.

The interview came back to me on a recent Monday afternoon when the staff gathered in Mr. Margin's office for the weekly assignment meeting and everyone showed up with the new books he or she had read over the weekend to make recommendations about reviewing them.

The report usually went clockwise around the conference table, starting at Mr. Margin's left with Ellie Bellyband, recounting in detail the plots of four or five English novels—English fiction is her specialty—which she would eventually dismiss for review because they weren't up to the authors' previous work, on to Ed Princeps at Mr. Margin's right. Ed would cover seven or eight, sometimes ten, books of scholarly interest. Ed's enthusiasm for all books is great, but for scholarly books very great, and it is difficult for Mr. Margin not to assign for review even the most esoteric item after Ed has claimed that it is witty, incisive, groundbreaking, written like a dream and to be ignored at our peril.

This Monday afternoon, Mr. Margin said that we would pass directly to Ed, who had something special to report on. "Ed!" Mr. Margin said with an emcee nod.

Ed always introduced what he said, even if it was only a word or two, with a cough, a pause and a smile. The cough was part apologetic and part authoritative, the smile was both boyish and devilish. Today he said dramatically, "This is a *big* one." And indeed in front of him were two thick volumes of bound galley proofs.

I suppose, like me, the others thought it was a definitive study, in progress many years. Actually, it was Norman Mailer's new novel, and everyone perked up. We had been hearing about it for months, and although proofs had been circulating among the book clubs and paperback houses, the reviewers hadn't seen a thing; that is, till now.

For myself, I was a bit taken aback, since I thought it was understood that contemporary American fiction was my "field" at *Belles Lettres*. However, Mr. Margin had his reasons for giving Ed first look.

"Before I begin," Ed said, "I'd like to say right off that Norman's novel is indescribable."

Ed had, for me, a disconcerting way of referring to well-known people by their first names. When it was "Pauline," "Mordecai," "Gore," you knew whom he meant, but occasionally it would be "John" or "Bill," and you had to ask John who, Bill who. Once, after being asked and telling us that the John was Updike he explained that he had been worrying about John a lot

*Frank Page's previous report on* Belles Lettres *appeared in the fall books issue of* The Nation.

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lately and consequently felt especially close to him. (In defense of this practice of Ed's I must say that once I mentioned him to Updike and Updike said, "How *is* Ed?" and went on to tell me that Ed's full first name was Editio, which I didn't know, adding with a sly smile, "He *is* an original, isn't he?")

Anyway, about Mailer's novel Ed continued, "It's called *Ancient Evenings*, and I say it's indescribable because when I get done you may not have a clear idea of what it's about. So I'm going to tell you what it's *like*. It's the Old Testament written by Mel Brooks, the *Book of the Dead* by Henry Miller, the *Iliad* by Woody Allen, the head of Nefertiti by Red Grooms . . ."

"I heard it has a lot of farting and puking in it," Ben Boards said. Ben is the art director of *Belles Lettres* and sits in on assignment meetings to get a sense of what's coming up. "A lot of goosing too," he added.

"Speak up! Speak up!" said Virginia Wrappers, a senior member of the staff who thought of herself—and everyone else did too—as the guardian of standards. She might actually have become hard of hearing over the years, but she did have a way of making people repeat things they wanted to say only once.

"A lot of goosing too," Ben Boards said.

"What does *that* mean?" she said.

Mr. Margin injected himself, as he often did, like a carbon rod into fissionable matter. "Ben said, Virginia, that he had heard that the new Mailer novel was full of vigorous vulgarity."

"I see," she said, and settled back.

"I asked Ed to report on the Mailer novel," Mr. Margin said, "because he has, as we all know, a strong classics background. *Ancient Evenings* is destined to be a controversial book, and we want to be on firm ground with it. This Mailer is not like any of the Mailers we are familiar with, not the early Mailer of *The Naked and the Dead*, nor the middle Mailer of *The Armies of the Night*, nor the recent Mailer of the Marilyn books and *The Executioner's Song*. This is an entirely new Mailer, which not everyone will be prepared for. I myself feel the book is a grand experiment, of . . . how many pages, Ed?"

Ed opened the back cover of the second volume and said, "Seventeen hundred and fourteen pages."

"Could I see that, please," said Barry Vellum, who took care of science and poetry books for *Belles Lettres*, mainly because nobody else was interested. "I went to school with Mailer, and I've read all his books."

Ed pushed the two volumes across the table and resumed talking. "What we have to recognize in considering this book is that Mailer has eschewed all his strengths—his deep understanding of modern society, his unmatched ear for the American idiom, his absolute mastery of narrative techniques, his quixotic readiness to fly in the face of popular prejudice, his unparalleled willingness to make a fool of himself—and it is this last attribute, if I may say, that is the most important for an artist to have . . ."

"Ed, may I interrupt?" Barry Vellum said. "I just opened the second volume to page 1231, and I'd like to read it."

"Do you think we have time for that?" Mr. Margin said.

"I think it might be instructive, Mr. Margin," Ed said.

"All right, Barry, read away."

Barry read:

> She delighted to search out rare sanctuaries throughout Thebes. Unlike Usermare, She was not only dedicated to Amon, but to gods revered in other cities, as Ptah in Memphi, or Thoth in Khnum, not to speak of the great worship of Osiris in Abydos, but these gods also had their little temples here with their loyal priests, plus many another god my Queen would find in many another temple, and often in the meanest places—at the back of a muddy lane in a slum of Thebes with the children so dirty and ignorant they did not bow their heads at the sight of Her nor express any sign of awe, but merely goggled their eyes. [Barry made goggle eyes.] Still (the lane too narrow for Her palanquin) She plunged Her fine feet and golden sandals to the very bottom of the alley, there to have her toes washed by the priests of this shabby little temple of—be it—Hathor or Bestet or Khonsu, or in finer quarters down broad avenues, past the gates of mansions with their own pillars, sentries, and privately commissioned small stone sphinx, we might pass through the slender marble columns of a "divine little temple," as She expressed it, to pay homage to Goddess Mut, who was Consort to Amon, or to . . .

"That's page 1231," Barry said.

COUNTING TIME

Either could go first
Or both perhaps at once
We've reached that age
Of grisly speculation
Surrounded by furnishings
Of loved ancestral places
Painted china, piles of quilts
Your grandma's walnut bed
Father's farmer vest watch
(Ebony stand I got in London)
Your mother's tulipwood desk,
Table silver from San Francisco
My grandfather's waffle iron
Wooden barn peg, prairie ledger
Mother's gold childhood ring
I meant for a deserving niece
Your Virginia aunts' needlepoint
Bearded Moses striking the rock
Your father's brush set and
Rare netsukes, books, bisque
What will happen to all this?
Soon to be loose upon the world
Claimed by relatives, auctioned off
Ending with fresh beginnings
No matter which of us loses life
The other shall not gain it
Staring faces in the furniture
Dark claw feet about to pounce
First to go will be the last.

*Curtis Harnack*

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"Yes, indeed," Ed said, "and what do you make of it, Barry?"

"Not much."

Ed did his cough and smile and said, "I'm not surprised. Can you take a page at random from the last half of any immense work, read it out of context, and expect it to come to anything? Suppose in 1921 you read page 877 from *Ulysses* to an assemblage like this?"

"All right," Barry said, "I'll try the first volume." He opened it near the beginning. "This is page 74."

"Barry," Mr. Margin said, "you're not planning to read more, are you?"

"More! More!" Virginia Wrappers said.

"Why not?" Ed said.

"All right," Mr. Margin said. "Everyone seems interested."

And Barry read:

> In such a darkness, void of light, no move in the wind, no breath to stir a thought, the query of the Sekhem persisted. One would be judged. And time went by without measure. Was it an hour, or a week before the light of the moon rose in my mind, and the interior of my body became bathed in its light? A bird with luminous wings flew in front of that full moon, and its head was as radiant as a point of light. The bird must be the Khu. Naming it, I realized that one thought, at least, had entered my head again, and must come from the Khu—this sweet bird of the night—a creature of divine intelligence given to us in loan just so much as the Ren or the Sekhem. Yes, like the Name and the Power, the Khu was here to light up your mind all the while you lived, but in death, it must return to heaven. For, unlike the Ba and the Ka, those fourth and fifth parts of the seven souls and spirits who could most certainly perish after your death, the Khu, like the Sekhem and the Ren, was eternal. Yet, not entirely eternal, not entirely undamaged. For out of the hovering of its . . .

"That's page 74, and I don't make much of it either." Barry pushed the two volumes back across the table toward Ed.

Mr. Margin said, "Thank you, Barry. Were the two pages in fact representative, Ed?"

"They were representative of *one* of the book's modes. There are others." But he did not elaborate, and he let the bound galleys lie in the middle of the table. I think he felt he had made an error in backing Barry's reading. He turned his attention, passively, to Mr. Margin, who said, "Well, do you have any suggestions for the reviewer, Ed?"

"I think Joyce Carol would know what to make of it," he said.

"She has a high shit threshold, but not high enough," Barry said.

"Speak up! Speak up!" Virginia Wrappers said.

"Joyce Carol Oates does not have a high enough shit threshold to review Norman Mailer's new novel," Barry said loudly.

"Well, then we don't want her," Virginia said.

"Any other suggestions," Mr. Margin said, throwing the matter open for general discussion.

It was hard to catch who said what, but some of the offerings went like this:

"How about one of those Columbia trochees, like Morris Dickstein?"

"Flaccid," someone said.

"Perhaps someone of more . . . stature," Mr. Margin said.

"How about Stephen Marcus?" someone said.

"Flaccid," was heard again.

"V.S. Pritchett," someone said.

"He wouldn't do it."

"Sure he would. It's Norman Mailer."

"I think we should stay in America," Mr. Margin said.

"How about another novelist, like Vonnegut?"

"What are the politics there? Have they crossed swords?"

"Vonnegut won't write for us since that review of him we ran."

"Ben DeMott would be thrilled to do it, and he's a soft touch."

"We are not interested in a 'soft touch,' we are interested in a sound judgment," Mr. Margin said, and turned to me: "Frank, do you have any ideas?"

"Would we be interested in John Simon?" I said.

"I won't be accused of abetting savagery," Mr. Margin said.

"Then I think I have someone," I said, "a writer of accomplishment and international reputation, who is creatively venturesome himself, without jealousy and considered by many to be a genius . . ."

"Goethe's dead," Ed Princeps said.

"But Anthony Burgess isn't," I said.

There was silence around the room. I watched Mr. Margin's face to see if he


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recalled our early interview. I don't think he did, because finally he said, "That's a *good* idea, Frank, a *damned* good idea. Do we all agree?" We did. "Then it's Burgess . . . for a *major review*! Claire," Mr. Margin said to Claire Tippin, his secretary, who had been taking notes through the meeting, "get a wire off to Tony soonest."

After the meeting I got Claire alone and asked her why Mr. Margin was being so nice to Mailer.

"I think," she said, "because Mailer agreed to review that new biography of himself. It would be a newsy piece, you have to admit."

"And in return . . ." I said.

"Nothing in writing," she said, "but understood."

And that's more or less how *Belles Lettres* works. Also, I must report that at the next meeting Barry showed up with his Bodley Head edition of *Ulysses* and read us page 877, which was from Molly Bloom's soliloquy and contrary to Ed's assertion might have done all right in 1921:

> . . . come 2 or 3 times with that tremendous brute of a thing he has I thought the vein or whatever they call it was going to burst though his nose is not so big after I took off all my things with the blinds down after my hours dressing and perfuming and combing it like iron or some kind of thick crowbar standing all the time he must have eaten oysters I think he was in great singing voice no I never in my life felt anyone had one the size of that to make you feel full . . .

Three or four times Virginia Wrappers asked Barry to speak up, and Barry when he was done suggested that that was the way Mailer should be writing. □

# The Luckiest Poet

BERNARD McCABE

ROBERT LOWELL: A Biography. *By Ian Hamilton. Random House. 527 pp. $20.*

*He was cozily physical. He liked to hold your hand, or if he walked with you, he liked your arm linked in his. The times I slept with Cal he wasn't crazily sort of sexy at all. He was very huggy. He'd hug you all night, and the minute he woke up he'd hug you. But I think he was quite panicked by thoughts of impotence.*

That comes not from *People* or *The New York Post* or one of those wretched English dailies, or from the life of the latest dead rock star. It's from the British poet Ian Hamilton's widely acclaimed authorized biography of Robert Lowell. The easy vulgarity is bad enough, but there is worse: for example, the extracts from a nurse's logbook dated a few months before Lowell died, only five years ago—coldly intimate physical details of the mentally ill poet's behavior that Hamilton somehow got hold of and somehow decided to print.

*Bernard McCabe is a professor of English at Tufts University. His critical articles have appeared in* Commonweal, Commentary, Saturday Review *and many other magazines.*

Lowell might well have laughed at those first fatuous remarks. After all, one of the last poems in his last book, *Day by Day*, has these delicate lines: "nothing lovelier than waking to find/ another breathing body in my bed . . ./ glowshadow halfcovered with day-clothes like my own/caught in my arms." The nurse's notes, especially with the ugly comment that Hamilton permits himself—"He becomes a humbled, pitiable creature, a huge child to be watched over"—are distasteful in the same way that his avid recountings of the dismally similar details of one mental breakdown after another (the Salzburg breakdown, the Buenos Aires breakdown, the New York breakdown, the many Boston breakdowns) are distasteful. "And Swift expires, a driv'ler and a show," Samuel Johnson's one piercing line, always seemed enough, if not more than enough. Peculiarly distasteful, also, is this biographer's attitude toward the various women, many of them quite young (one was only 19), who got swept up in Lowell's manic moods and were overwhelmed by that intense, very attractive, powerful and difficult man. Hamilton practices smart put-downs on some of those harmless victims.

Its tastelessness is one of the reasons I found it hard to read this important book. Another is its latent hostility to Lowell. There appears to be a fashion at present for poets' lives written by critics who consciously or unconsciously *dislike* their subjects and even their subjects' work; I'm thinking of James Atlas's relentless biography of Delmore Schwartz, Russell Frazer's absurdly mannered life of R.P. Blackmur, John Haffenden's heavy-handed account of John Berryman. These biographies are full of invaluable background material that makes you want to read them. But the only partially concealed animus that informs them makes you wonder why their authors ever wanted to write them.

The reception of Hamilton's book has been positively rapturous. The publisher was able to quote a full page of happy welcomes for it in a *New York Times Book Review* advertisement, including some mellow praise from *The Times* itself and a squib from *Time*'s gloating account of the scandals ("Wild Man"). There's little question that this book is in vogue. It also undoubtedly contains much useful documentation, clearly and intelligently presented. There is the early correspondence with John Crowe Ransom, Randall Jarrell and Allen Tate; the wry, patient and affectionate letters and reminiscences of old Lowell friends like Frank Parker, Blair Clark, Peter Taylor, Robert Fitzgerald, William Alfred, William Meredith and John Thompson; and the fascinating details of Frank Bidart's almost symbiotic relationship with Lowell in the later years. Even more valuable are the extracts from Lowell's unpublished autobiographical prose sketch, as absorbing and immediate as *Life Studies*. And there are many important letters from Lowell's three wives. Jean Stafford's are quick, probing and sometimes, inevitably, bitter (after all, he did break her nose—twice). Elizabeth Hardwick's are often strikingly beautiful in their compassion, understanding, sorrow and, not least, wit. Through them we can watch her for twenty years facing up to her extraordinary husband's strengths and weaknesses. Caroline Blackwood's seem lost but well meaning. One is glad and grateful to have all that. Yet, even so, uncertainty about Hamilton's taste and tact makes one uneasy about what he may have chosen *not* to show us.

One puzzling feature of the book is that with only a few exceptions it is hardly made clear who the people who have supplied all this documentation really are. Most of them, of course, are

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creative people of considerable stature; but from Tate through Hardwick to Bidart Hamilton makes little attempt to present the rich cultural ambiance in which Lowell moved. In fact, he makes little serious attempt to examine Lowell's intellectual life at all, a criticism Helen Vendler made briefly but firmly in her otherwise overgenerous review in *The New York Review of Books.*

A case in point: this time not a literary one. The young Lowell, married to the still-Catholic Jean Stafford and influenced in part by Allen Tate, converted enthusiastically to Catholicism, an act and a self-commitment that had immense consequences for his early books. This conversion also led Lowell into some eager involvement with the Catholic Worker movement. Hamilton handles this experience by quoting a flippant letter from Stafford about her visits to the Catholic Worker's office and House of Hospitality for down-and-outs in the Bowery, in which she speaks of her reluctance to sit down between "a Negro and a Chinese" to do "a tiring and filthy job." There is no indication from Hamilton (perhaps he doesn't know) that one of the people Stafford met there was Dorothy Day, a woman widely admired for her work with the destitute in a dozen cities, and for her leadership of a tenacious group of witnesses for many radical and, especially, nonviolent causes. (Day's group was perhaps the first to organize an antinuclear demonstration in the United States, and she went to jail for refusing to participate in New York City's first organized "rehearsal for nuclear war.") My point here is that the movement was a serious one, with solid intellectual underpinnings, and Lowell took it very seriously. But Hamilton uses Lowell's involvement only to illustrate the manic nature of his religious enthusiasm. With the aid of more acid comments from Stafford, Lowell's conscientious objection to Allied saturation bombing in World War II, clearly Catholic Worker-inspired, emerges as merely a kind of intellectual folly. Hamilton is too quick to associate Lowell's powerfully held beliefs with "the kingdom of the mad—/its hackneyed speech, its homicidal eye."

Lowell's own dismissive portrait of his younger self, in "Memories of West Street and Lepke" ("I was a fire-breathing Catholic C.O.,/and made my manic statement"), does not give Hamilton license to dismiss the earlier sincerities so lightly, if only because the impulse and ideas behind Lowell's temporary conversion stayed with him throughout his life. A careful examination of those ideas might, for example, have helped Hamilton do more with "Beyond the Alps" than offer a simplistic explication ("directed . . . against the Catholic Church"), and might have

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helped him to establish the complexity of Lowell's intellectual life in general.

Hamilton's biography is not a serious work of criticism; in fact it is dangerously unserious. I am not thinking now of the pedestrian passages on Lowell's metrical experiments, though they did irresistibly recall my own distant schooldays, half-hearing some learned respectable bald head reducing Keats's odes to iambs and anapests; nor of Hamilton's sporadic musings on Berryman's or Jarrell's "influence." I mean rather his basic failure to relate the life to the work in useful ways. In *Life Studies* Lowell uses his life to contemplate history, faith and violence ("Beyond the Alps"), to discuss manners, death and war ("My Last Afternoon with Uncle Devereux Winslow"), to look at a dissolving, corrupted world ("Skunk Hour"), to see mania as a diagnostic instrument for confronting that world ("A Mad Negro Soldier Confined at Munich"). In *Notebook* and *History* Lowell invents a special kind of life-telling in which the poet, so to speak, tries himself out through history. What would Adam or Solomon or Harpo Marx have felt like if he were Robert Lowell? A true critical biography surely must work at assessing these strange exercises and Lowell's profoundly original use of a doppelgänger effect. Lowell's methods in his later poetry, exciting and disturbing as it so often is, raise many difficult questions for the reader of his life; the most notorious and controversial example of his dangerous life-into-art practice was the working of extracts from Hardwick's anguished letters to him into his *Dolphin* sequence. But he must have come to see those intimate documents as part of a public mode. Such private-public decisions, when they work, provide the meaning and tension of his poetry. When the method fails, as it sometimes does, it doesn't seem justified; it becomes cruel—both to himself and to others, as Lowell recognized:

> not avoiding injury to others,
> not avoiding injury to myself . . .
>
> my eyes have seen what my hand did.
> ("Dolphin")

The critical biographer *has* to make some judgments and discriminations here. Hamilton knows perfectly well what Lowell was doing: "he had made his personal predicaments stand as fit metaphors for the terrors of the globe." Very well said. But then Hamilton persists in focusing on the personal case history, forgetting *History*. The book exudes an odd Bedlam atmosphere, with the reader invited to peek at the mad poet in the straw, and with the poems becoming "just symptoms" of this madness, to borrow a phrase from Lloyd Schwartz's perceptive review in the Boston *Phoenix*.

Robert Lowell led an amazing life. In a letter to him, Elizabeth Bishop said:

> . . . all you have to do is put down the names! And the fact that it seems significant, illustrative, American, etc. gives you, I think, the confidence you display about tackling any idea or theme, *seriously*, in both writing and conversation. In some ways you are the luckiest poet I know!

Bishop was surely right. "At worst, life is pretty wonderful," said Lowell, in an expansive youthful letter. That oddly touching remark recalls the last sentence in his "Afterthought" to *Notebook*: "In truth I seem to have felt mostly the joys of living; in remembering, in recording, thanks to the gift of the Muse, it is the pain." But the double aspect of Robert Lowell, the painful writer, the joyful man, sinks from sight in this grim book. □

# Wrong But Legal?

## SANFORD LEVINSON

DEATH PENALTIES: The Supreme Court's Obstacle Course. *By Raoul Berger. Harvard University Press. 242 pp. $17.50.*

Raoul Berger was born in 1901. That is not irrelevant, for he is one of the few remaining writers on constitutional law whose fundamental views were formed by the crisis of the 1930s, when an overweening judiciary set itself against state and Federal efforts to confront the Great Depression. As popularly backed legislation was struck down in the name of such dubious concepts as "freedom of contract," a phrase nowhere found in the text of the Constitution, progressive writers like Louis Boudin and Henry Steele Commager responded by challenging the legitimacy of judicial review itself. In his acerbic *Woe Unto You, Lawyers!*, Fred Rodell of the Yale Law School typified a widely shared view when he argued that "any law, state or federal, is entirely proper and valid unless clearly and unmistakably forbidden by the words of the Constitution." He correctly pointed out that very little constitutional law would survive were this principle to be followed, but that was not a criticism—in 1939.

Over the past thirteen years, Berger has examined various aspects of our post-1939 constitutional law, and his theme has been unrelenting. Although the framers of the 1787 Constitution intended that judicial review be part of our political structure, he argues, they intended that such review be exercised only in the strictest of circumstances. Judges were not to have a general veto power based on their notions of justice or sound public policy, but were to be narrowly confined within the limits of the written text. This emphasis on the "jurisprudence of the text" (coupled with a focus on the purported intentions of the authors of the text) was, of course, also articulated by those great heroes of 1950s progressivism, Justices Hugo Black and William O. Douglas, who argued both that the First Amendment's "no law" indeed meant "*no* law" and that the founders intended this happy result.

Since the 1950s, though, the constitutional spotlight has shifted from the First Amendment to the Fourteenth, upon whose guarantees of equal protection and due process mountains of constitutional law have been raised. In *Government by Judiciary* (1977), Berger attacked the validity of most of the contemporary Supreme Court's Fourteenth Amendment decisions. Now, in *Death Penalties*, he argues that the Court's various decisions limiting the power of states to impose the death penalty are wholly illegitimate.

Any textualist comes up with a devastating problem in regard to the death penalty: both the Fifth and Fourteenth Amendments specifically acknowledge the possibility of a death penalty. They require only that due process of law be followed before a person can be deprived of life. The text therefore cannot

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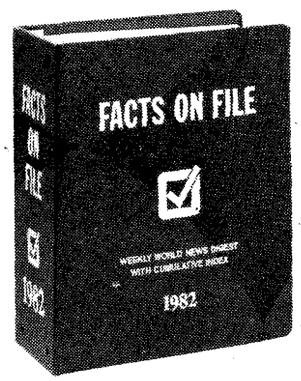
plausibly be read to deny the state the power to impose a death penalty. Even if one, unlike Berger, is willing to read the due process clause more expansively than did its framers, one is still led only to the qualification that the state must cross several hurdles before imposing the death penalty; not unless one accepts that bugaboo of New Deal reformers, the so-called "substantive due process"—the utilization of the due process clause in behalf of a nontextual substantive right of freedom of contract—can that clause be read to invalidate the death penalty itself.

The Eighth Amendment's prohibition of cruel and unusual punishment has also been a focus for textualists, but Berger easily shows that the various framers did not regard infliction of death as cruel or unusual. For him that is enough. He rejects as patently elitist the notion that courts and judges have any special insight into what constitutes forbidden cruelty. Respect for majority governance, he argues, requires acceptance of the majority's commitment, in many states, to capital punishment, given the lack of constitutionally authorized judicial veto of such policies, however unwise they may be.

As an opponent of the death penalty, I would like to think that Berger's arguments could be easily disregarded. But the issues he raises cannot be dismissed. When this magazine joins other progressives in condemning the Burger (or, more accurately, the Rehnquist) Court for betraying constitutional text or the vision of one or another favorite founder, it is implicitly adopting the general theoretical position articulated, however repetitiously and infelicitously, by Berger.

For the (conservative) Court to impose its vision of society on the rest of us is illegitimate, we argue. But why? One response is explicitly political: One praises or condemns courts simply on the basis of approval or disapproval of the political values they adopt. I am not bothered by this, but the candid rejection of traditional constitutional discourse is not yet common—at least in public—even among those who consider themselves quite alienated from mainstream American politics. We too have our dinners, whether sponsored by the American Civil Liberties Union or the National Emergency Civil Liberties Committee, which honor persons for their fidelity to text or to the vision of the founders as revealed in the text, and we purport to believe that this language is meaningful. But, as already seen, that discourse scarcely justifies such contemporary exertions of judicial power as in the abortion or death penalty cases. For however socially commendable these may be, they are indefensible in terms of the legal analysis bequeathed us by Black and Rodell and carried on by Berger.

A central problem with Berger's approach is that its full acceptance renders illegitimate the work not only of the recent Court but also, in substantial measure, of our entire judicial history. Few of the important decisions of John Marshall, for example, can be defended on Berger's grounds. Consider Marshall's argument in rejecting the power of a state to tax an arm of the national government, in this instance the Bank of the United States: "There is no express provision for the case, but the claim has been sustained on a principle which so entirely pervades the constitution, is so intermixed with the materials which compose it, so interwoven with its web, so blended with its texture, as to be incapable of being separated from it, without rending it into shreds." This eloquent burst of metaphors is designed to surmount the simple fact that the Constitution no-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where specifically prohibits the state action in question. That did not stop Marshall, and *McCulloch v. Maryland* is regarded as perhaps the most important single decision in our history.

Berger has never fully addressed the question of how much of our constitutional law he would be willing to scuttle in the name of fidelity to his crabbed notions of text and history, perhaps because one can make no sense of our past within the limits of the tradition he represents. Nonetheless, the questions he asks are of vital import. In rejecting his arguments (which I think we must ultimately do), we are also repudiating the jurisprudential structure by which most liberals at once denounced the pre-New Deal court and applauded its successor's protective approach toward the First Amendment.

To defend such modern cases as those dealing with abortion or capital punishment requires the construction of a mode of constitutional discourse very different from that of our ancestors. (Two recent books embarking on such a project are *Constitutional Fate,* by Philip Bobbitt, and Michael Perry's *The Constitution, The Courts, and Human Rights.*) But it is naïve to pretend that the construction will be an easy task or that we can so easily shed the view of the Constitution, and its limits, articulated by Berger. □

# DANCE.

## IRIS M. FANGER

As the Joffrey Ballet embarks on its national tour following the New York and Washington, D.C., seasons, the uncertainty about the future that has traveled with the company for the past few years seems once again to be part of its baggage. Although an announcement was made about a second home for the company at the Los Angeles Music Center, few details have been given beyond the dates of two weeks of performances there (April 30-May 15). The spring-summer tour includes stops in upstate New York and in Seattle, Portland and San Francisco, but there are big gaps in the schedule and no definite bookings beyond mid-July. Late fall seasons are anticipated in both Los Angeles and New York City.

*Iris M. Fanger is director of the Harvard Summer Dance Center. She is also a dance critic and historian.*

The dance boom of the past decade may well have gone bust, with reports of financial instability and/or low morale from companies throughout the United States. The economic malaise will undoubtedly claim victims, especially among companies without specific identities or geographic connections. The Joffrey Ballet has been a vagabond ever since its beginning in 1956 when six dancers made twenty-three one-night stands across the country in a borrowed station wagon. Since 1966, the Joffrey has been in residence at City Center in New York, but its mainstay has been national tours. It has suffered in New York as the "third" company—after the New York City Ballet, with its lustrous reflection of Balanchine's image, and American Ballet Theatre, which fields the glitzy stars and spectacular productions of ballet warhorses. In Los Angeles, the Joffrey will be number three again, at least for a while, because the Los Angeles Ballet, directed by John Clifford, has been there for ten years and ABT is a frequent visitor. (ABT will perform in Los Angeles for three weeks beginning March 8.)

Another confusion of the Joffrey's own making is its embrace of the contemporary style of dance—a melding of ballet and modern technique. Robert Joffrey started a trend in 1973 when he invited Twyla Tharp to create "Deuce Coupe," which combined Joffrey Ballet dancers and members of Tharp's own company, and which was followed that year by a second work, "As Time Goes By." The Tharp ballets were wildly successful with both audiences and critics, and Joffrey was encouraged to commission more works by modern choreographers, including 1980's "Night" and this past season's "Fire," both by postmodern choreographer Laura Dean. Gerald Arpino, responsible for a large chunk of the Joffrey repertory, has created numerous works that tread the fuzzy line between ballet and modern dance. Thus the Joffrey Ballet, without a strictly defined personality, competes for audiences and funds with New York City-based modern dance companies as well as ballet companies.

Joffrey himself spends less time in the studio because of his dual responsibilities as chief administrator/artistic director (the company manager resigned before the New York season) and elder statesman of the dance world: he sits on several national and international committees. When he started the company, he choreographed all the works, but he has not done a new ballet since 1980.

Despite the company's reputation as contemporary, young, fast and technically slick both in dancers and in repertory, Joffrey has devoted considerable time to seeking out and restaging ballets from the past. There is no question, though, of reinterpreting a work to fit a different time or audience. He insists on a literal approach to history, considering each ballet as if it were as immutable as a piece of sculpture or a painting, to be admired but then left behind in the museum. The problem here is that dance is a time art, and with the quirkiness of live performance, there never *is* a permanent state. (Consider, too, that memory, a trickster at best, remains the chief authority for transmitting the older ballets to the next generation.)

All the same, Joffrey's solicitude for details enhances each of the revivals. For example, in Anthony Tudor's "Offenbach in the Underworld" (created in 1955, first performed by the company in 1975 and returned to the repertory this season in a staging by Celia Franca), the hair color of Madame La Patronne is the exact orangey shade worn by the women of the demimonde in Toulouse-Lautrec's lithographs. The slatterns depicted by the corps de ballet assume the postures of the dancers he sketched, hunched over at the shoulders with tiny wispy-haired heads thrust forward as if to attack the audience; when they lift their skirts to dance the cancan, they display undies and garters, not genteel ballet tights. The Joffrey production comes to life with the entrance of Beatriz Rodriguez as the Operetta Star. Rodriguez, who joined the company in 1972, is a mature actress and a technically proficient dancer, as is Trinette Singleton, another veteran, who etches the sharp portrait of Madame La Patronne. (Not many of the older dancers have remained with the company. Some of the younger ones tend to look and move alike, and lack sufficient dramatic range for ballets dependent on character and plot.)

The revival of Sir Frederick Ashton's "Illuminations," originally choreographed in 1950, is both a puzzlement and a reminder of a past when a ballet could tell a story connected to words or incidents. "Illuminations" evokes the life and poetry of Arthur Rimbaud,

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with a structure from Benjamin Britten's song cycle of the same name. Continuity for the various themes is meant to be provided by the Poet (Luis Perez), but he looks as confused by the passing show as some of the viewers. Profane Love (Rodriguez again) is far more attractive than Sacred Love (Patricia Miller), who leads the Poet off to heaven after he is inflicted with a death wound, real fake stage blood staining his arm. The original New York City Ballet production is legendary for the performance by Nicholas Magallanes in the leading role, and for the heady subject matter, daring for its time. Perez's characterization is vaguer, so neither aspect comes through in the Joffrey production.

After twenty-six years, the essence of the Joffrey Ballet remains quicksilver, hard to capture and ever-changing. The "bicoastal" residence, as described by Joffrey, with the plans for Los Angeles and hopes to keep a foothold in New York, might be a variant of the company's old habit of touring, but it holds the possibility of survival for the company.

A postscript about Ron Reagan's recent resignation from the company: perhaps his treatment as the kid in the back row of the chorus, blocked at the rear table of the cafe in "Offenbach in the Underworld," and as a walk-on in "Illuminations" was a clue to how he did or didn't mesh with the company. □

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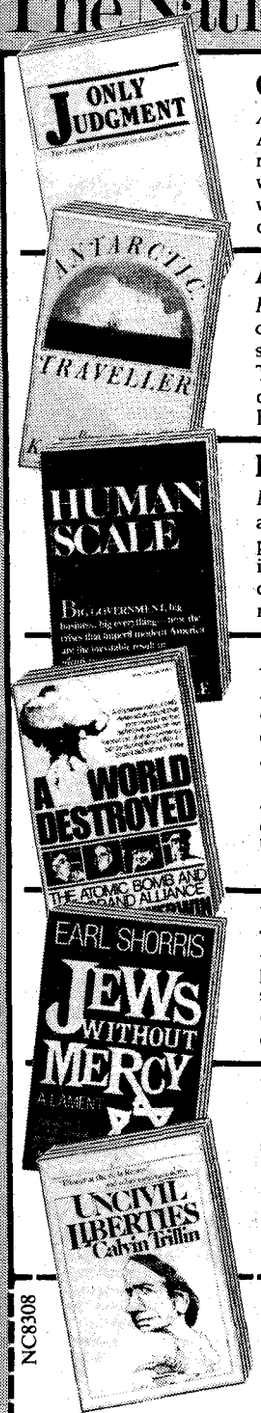


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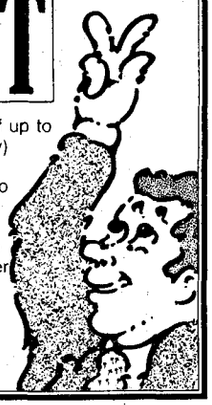


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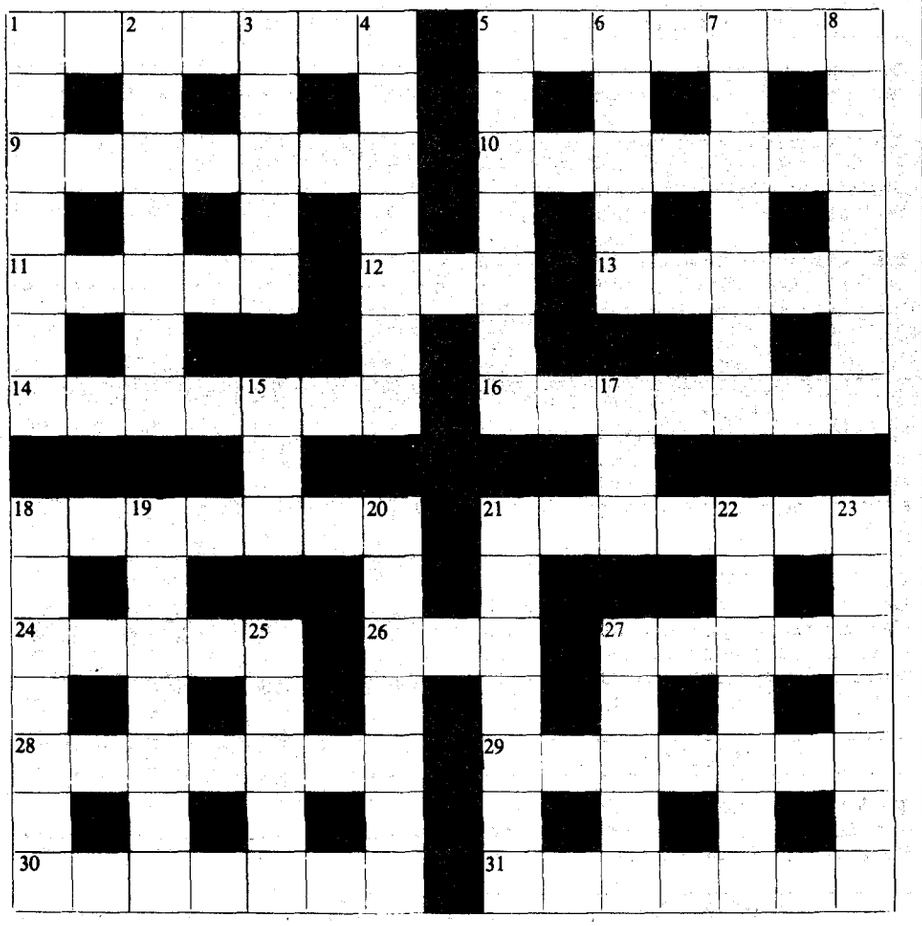
# Crossword Puzzle No. 1951

FRANK W. LEWIS



ACROSS

1 and 5 Horatio Alger model of a bootblack? (7,7)
9 Not quite vocal in some disturbance, but many refer to it as an alligator couple, by the sound of it. (7)
10 Carry something, as they say, when sick at heart coming back to a certain point, which might be soothing. (7)
11 Cut up a sort of meat, perhaps. (5)
12 and 17 down One way to reveal a devilish portrayal! (6)
13 and 14 Part of the lady's underthings gets in the laundry, being perhaps associated with the worst kind of advertising. (12)
16 You may have made a mistake to use such things. (7)
18 and 23 down Referring to such, exceptions are usually made, but the firm evidently makes gifts. (7,7)
21 Descriptive of 17 as defined by 12? (7)
24 See 4 down
26 and 15 down What one doesn't hope to rouse in a snake, or does one hope to do so? (6)
27 and 8 down One Watt specifically associated with such power devices. (5,7)
28 Is one afraid to keep his head covered? (7)
29 Some call it a sweet potato. (7)
30 Stood in a certain way. (7)
31 Georgian beginnings in an early environment showing up with enthusiastic anticipation. (7)

DOWN

1 Box tier, the fall of which is reputed marked. (7)
2 One thus goes to drinking places—lines are formed being given equal weight. (7)
3 Not suitable in small living quarters. (5)
4 and 24 across Not what the successful farmer suffers—only the young are supposed to have them. (7,5)
5 With Jezebel, lips especially show the curve! (7)
6 Certainly not on the cuff, when shortened, as they say. (2,3)
7 Man included in the order, or perhaps the Bishop. (7)
8 See 27 across
15 See 26 across
17 See 12 across
18 One might be only a little brave, if so. (7)
19 Was improperly tied with sex? (7)
20 27 down for what hooligans might have done to the place. (7)
21 Take a little something and sit, as one might presume. (7)
22 More wanting to be born, as some say, ending up with a rocky ride. (7)
23 See 18 across
25 One who hits a ball high, or slides successfully? (5)
27 Can't this, without the apostrophe? (5)

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